

Green Construction Roundup

December, 2008 No. 178

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Construction News

Swindon could become first carbon negative town in UK

Swindon council is working on plans to create the first carbon-negative town in Britain.

The council has asked Brian Mark, director of sustainability at green consultancy Fulcrum, and a member of the government's Renewables Advisory Board, to turn power stations into combined heat and power plants fuelled by renewable sources, including the town's rubbish.

The team want Swindon's system to emulate aspects of Copenhagen's district heating system, which is based on a similar concept and supplies 97% of the city with heat.

Building. 19 December (Pg. 9)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3130265>

Eco-town champion admits programme is likely to fail

David Lock, chairman of David Lock Associates, which is involved in two of the government schemes, and a former chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), which has been advising the government on the programme, said it was hard to see how any schemes could get planning permission before the next election, and that if the Conservatives win, they would scrap the schemes.

Building. 19 December (Pg. 19)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=555&storycode=3130320>

Flexible options to replace unworkable zero carbon target

The Communities Department looks likely to announce options to replace the zero carbon target. The zero-carbon taskforce and the Home Builders Federation say the department accepts that the current definition of zero carbon is unworkable.

Building. 12 December (Pg. 11)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3129727>

Could the princes green semi save the planet?

Prince Charles's attempts to redefine British architecture have entered a new phase with the unveiling of his foundation's experimental eco-house designed in traditional style. The design, built of natural materials such as clay, sheep's wool and lime, will be a challenge to house builders and the government to build homes in a radically different way once the economy recovers.

Building Design. 12 December (Pg. 1)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3129717>

BRE warns: Don't misuse green guide

Concerns have been raised after Milton Keynes council made it mandatory for all new buildings to use materials with high ratings from the online *Green Guide*.

In answer Paul Gibbon, BRE's global director of materials, said insisting on materials that are given a high manufacture rating could lead many materials to be excluded, despite being better performing when in use.

Building. 05 December (Pg. 10)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3129128>

Green guide flawed says lobby group

The BRE *Green Guide*, which is meant to help architects and other professionals select the most sustainable materials, has come under attack from lobby group the Good Homes Alliance (GHA). In a report due soon, the GHA is set to call for an immediate review of the Green Guide for use in the Code for Sustainable Homes and as a planning policy instrument because it claims the guide is doing more harm than good.

Building Design. 05 December (Pg. 1)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=426&storycode=3129274>

Boycott non green clients, says Whitby

Leading engineer Mark Whitby has called on design professionals to boycott work from environmentally harmful clients.

Speaking at the Climate Solutions conference in Copenhagen, Whitby said engineers and architects were failing to act on the environment in the same way the financial sector had ducked acting on sub-prime mortgages.

Building Design. 05 December (Pg. 5)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=3129066>

Periodical Articles

Green winners and losers in 2008

The debate is still open about how economics will influence sustainability, but in the short term, many in the industry are faced with the reality of projects being pulled outright or having green budgets cut.

Article covering a brief review of the year in the form of some stand-out projects, people and legislation; the year's best in sustainability.

Building Design. 19 December (Pg. 15)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3130330>

Micro CHP: Home made

Generating free electricity while you heat your home sounds like a good deal. Micro combined heat and power (CHP) systems have been doing this for several years, but none have made it to market in the UK – so far.

There are two main varieties of domestic micro CHP: Stirling engines and fuel cells. At present, there are no fuel cell systems on the market, although Ceres Power is planning to launch one with British Gas in 2011. Stirling engines produce between 6kWh and 10kWh of heat for every 1kWh of electricity. The more heat they produce the more electricity they generate, which means lower emissions and more money saved.

This article looks at Micro CHP units due to hit the UK market next year and asks, are they too good to be true?

Building. 12 December (Pg. 52-53)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=331&storycode=3129598>

House doctor - Breathing space

Along with increases in insulation levels and higher U-values for windows, the last revision to the Building Regulations saw a change from a preferred air leakage rate to a limit state value, in an effort to achieve more energy-efficient houses. A very well sealed house with good insulation needs remarkably little in the way of additional heating and, in the race to create zero-carbon homes, makes a significant contribution. However, a completely sealed house has the potential to become unpleasant to live in.

This article looks at whole-house solutions which contribute to energy efficiency while avoiding poor ventilation, which can cause a health hazard.

Building. 12 December (Pg. 61)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=331&storycode=3129596>

Second wind

Cambridge university lecturer Shaun Fitzgerald believes designers have got it wrong when it comes to naturally ventilating school classrooms. He reckons that despite the idea that buildings with opening

windows use less energy than mechanically ventilated ones, the savings are just not being realised. What's more, the indoor air quality of classrooms is suffering.

Article looking at the results of a six year research programme at the BP Institute in Cambridge to understand the flow of natural ventilation in buildings and work out how this might be used to pioneer new strategies for low energy building design.

Building. 05 December (Pg. 66-68)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=482&storycode=3129093>

BREEAM

Since its creation in 1990, BREEAM has expanded from office projects to cover all kinds of building and has been updated regularly to remain ahead of legislative requirements, with the aim of encouraging sustainable design above and beyond the requirements of legal compliance. The most recent update, carries a revision of the technical requirements for a number of credits, to align with current good practice, but also has more fundamental changes. This article explains how BREEAM'S 2008 update responds to concerns about the limitations of its approach to the assessment of sustainable buildings.

Building Services Journal. December 2008 (Pg. 50-51)

<http://www.bsdlive.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=3128376>

The natural alternative: heat pumps offer low carbon solution

Reserves of fossil fuels, such as gas, are finite and produce carbon dioxide when they are burnt, adding to the effects of climate change. This has led to the uptake of alternative, lower carbon solutions such as heat pump systems. As a result, air-conditioning companies have started to introduce air-to-water and ground-source-to-water heat pumps to provide warm water for under floor heating and hand washing. This type of technology has been available for some time in other areas of the world such as Japan and northern Europe, where it is seen as the best way of providing hot water for both light commercial and domestic applications.

Focus on HVAC, which investigates air to water CO2 heat pumps, offering building services engineers the next step in efficiency.

Building Services Journal. December 2008 (Pg. 53-54)

<http://www.bsdlive.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=317&storycode=3128390>

Events

[Green roofs - Basic principles and design](#)

Although green roof technology is mainstream in most of Europe, there is currently little understanding or expertise in the UK. It is important that professionals within the built environment sector develop an understanding of the technology to ensure that implementation of such systems at a local and regional level deliver long term sustainable solutions.

These sessions have been developed in partnership between CIRIA, the Green Roof consultancy and Livingroofs.org who are working together to deliver guidance on the implementation of green roofs, green walls and other biodiversity features. The training will enable delegates to efficiently plan, design and manage green roofs in accordance with best practice guidance and the relevant regulatory framework.

Venue – Sheffield (20 Jan 2009), and Glasgow (17 Feb 2009)

Contact - (0)20 7549 3300, or visit <http://www.ciria.org.uk>

[SUDS foundation course](#)

10 February

Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) are arguably one of the most significant developments in urban drainage in recent years.

These training modules have been developed in partnership with EPG and Robert Bray Associates to complement current regulations and the latest SUDS guidance. The training programme will enable practitioners to efficiently plan, design, construct and manage SUDS schemes in accordance with best practice guidance and the relevant legal and regulatory framework.

The course price includes a copy of the comprehensive 'SUDS manual' enabling you to add to the skills learnt on the day as and when required.

Venue – Limerick

Contact - (0)20 7549 3300, or visit <http://www.ciria.org.uk>

Ecobuild 2009

3/4/5 March

Having outgrown its original venue, Ecobuild, along with its sister event, Futurebuild is now housed in Earls Court. It has more than doubled in size and attendance every year since the move, in 2006. Over 500 exhibitors and nearly 26,000 visitors took part in 2008, making Ecobuild the biggest event dedicated to sustainable design, construction and the built environment in the world.

Venue – Earls Court, London

Contact - +44 (0) 207 763 5929, or visit <http://www.ecobuild.co.uk>

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