

Green Construction Roundup

February, 2009 No. 180

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Construction News

Foreign CO2 could be stored under North Sea

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is considering the move as part of a drive to make the UK a leader in Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), and in turn creating thousands of jobs. A recent DECC report estimates using CCS on coal-fired power plants could create 50,000 British jobs by 2030 in a market worth £2.4bn a year to the UK.

Building. 27 February (Pg. 10)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3134867>

Rivals set to challenge BREEAM

BRE could lose its monopoly on the energy ratings market for non-domestic buildings if new proposals are implemented. The ideas are contained in the UK Green Building Council's (UK-GBC) response to the government's consultation on a Code for Sustainable Buildings (CSB). The consultation would allow overseas systems such as LEED and Green Star to compete with BREEAM and would also set the CSB in contrast to the Code for Sustainable Homes, which was largely based on the eco-homes standard.

Building. 27 February (Pg. 12)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3134895>

Vinoly's Battersea eco tower scrapped

Rafael Viñoly has abandoned his plans for a 250m-high tower at the heart of the masterplan for Battersea Power Station. Scaled down plans, missing the signature 'eco-chimney', were presented by Viñoly in person to Cabe's design review panel, after the London Mayor, Boris Johnson, and his senior planning officials warned the architect and the developer, Treasury Holdings, that he would oppose the scheme because of its impact on the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey world heritage site.

Building Design. 27 February (Pg. 1)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3134814>

Cost of pipes stymies green energy

CityWest Homes has abandoned a plan to connect eight properties to the Pimlico District Heating Undertaking because the estimate from utilities contractors was £1.7m, 70% higher than expected. The price hikes were caused by the cost of the pipes and a lack of competition among installers. The scheme was to have linked to the government's Whitehall district heating system, which heats 18 government offices.

Building. 20 February (Pg. 12)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3134328>

Green pages comes to housebuilders aid

Training firm Sustainable Homes is launching The Green Pages to help developers meet the Code for Sustainable Homes and Ecohomes standards. The guide will contain a list of suppliers that the

organisation has checked for robustness, references, past projects and the ability to meet large orders. Energy, site waste management, materials, pollution, ecology and management are covered. The Green Pages will be free to house builders, but suppliers will pay between £1,000 and £4,500 to go through the validation process. The amount paid will depend on the size of the company.
Building. 20 February (Pg. 14)

RIBA to lobby for role in green retrofitting

The RIBA wants to promote the role of architects in the government's proposal to green all homes by 2030. The institute is expected to lobby hard for architects to play a key role in the draft heat and energy saving scheme, announced recently, now subject to a three-month consultation.

Building Design. 20 February (Pg. 4)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3134069>

Contractors to cover costs of environmental makeovers

The government is considering allowing homeowners to carry out an environmental makeover of their homes that would be free at the point of delivery. Owners would pay for the improvements via a levy on their energy bill or council tax, making a net saving on their bills. The plan, unveiled by the Department of Environment and Climate Change, would see contractors and fitters partnering with financial institutions to cover the capital costs.

Building. 13 February (Pg. 10)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3133877>

Carbon Challenge site mothballed

The Bickershaw Colliery scheme near Wigan was to have been the third of the Carbon Challenge sites promoted by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to pilot zero-carbon building. However, the government has withdrawn its tender notice for private partners. The HCA says the scheme is now under review and may ultimately have to go ahead without initially meeting the zero-carbon standard.

Building. 13 February (Pg. 14)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3133894>

Fears over costs derail affordable housing model

The government has revised proposals to pilot a new model of affordable housing after deciding it was too expensive. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) owns the Cashes Green site in Stroud, Gloucestershire, on which the concept of community land trusts (CLTs) was to be piloted. It is now due to file a planning application for the site and open discussions on alternative options.

Building. 13 February (Pg. 23)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=555&storycode=3133864>

Renewable energy funding at risk

Last month, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced it was closing the £50 million second phase of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP), to new applicants from June 2009. It has now told renewables lobbyists that the proposed introduction of feed-in tariffs, an alternative incentive for micro-renewables that involves paying above market price to those who generate renewable energy, will not be introduced until April 2010.

Building. 06 February (Pg. 14)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3133371>

London council in crisis talks over affordable homes target

Newham council is to hold urgent talks with the Greater London Authority over its request that the borough provide almost 6,000 affordable homes by 2011. The dispute centres around mayor Boris Johnson's manifesto pledge to scrap his predecessors 50% affordable housing target and instead negotiate targets with each borough. Newham initially refused to negotiate with the GLA over the new target suggested.

Building. 06 February (Pg. 15)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=29&storycode=3133377>

Periodical Articles

The Natural House

The design for the Natural House, now under construction at the BRE, will use simple core products to achieve robust thermal performance. It is also hoped that these simple technologies will last at least 200 years.

The Prince's Foundation's Natural House is an attempt at cutting domestic carbon and energy inputs by 70% while retaining construction quality, the house's inherent simplicity, along with its traditional design, aims to distinguish it from the other eco-homes at the innovation park. This short article looks at the green characteristics.

Building Design. 27 February (Pg. 16-17)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=453&storycode=3134789>

No biomass, no turbines, no solar panels. Is Passivhaus the way to zero carbon?

Passivhaus isn't a ready-made product. It is a series of principles that are applied to building design. As you'd expect with a German export, it is solid and reliable. The Passivhaus standard has been around for 17 years, with 10-15,000 buildings completed according to its principles. This is a big draw as it makes it much easier to deliver low-energy buildings than grappling with the new technologies needed to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes.

This article looks at PassivHaus, which is winning admirers in the UK, many of whom argue that its simple approach is far more practical than the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Building. 13 February (Pg. 44-47)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=583&storycode=3133804>

Tidal tussle

Confirmation of the shortlist of tidal power schemes for the Severn Estuary now under consideration by ministers coincided with the publication of criteria being used by government to assess sites for new nuclear power stations. These two events indicate that the government has finally come to terms with the fact that it must demonstrate its support for major privately financed energy projects if it is to encourage the private sector to invest in them.

Discusses whether the government is finally taking a more active role in the development of the UK's energy infrastructure.

New Civil Engineer. 05 February (Pg. 14-15)

<http://www.nce.co.uk/tidal-tussle/1984162.article>

Siren call

Building service engineers are heavily focussed on energy efficiency and carbon saving issues; however, as a result one important area is often overlooked. Water conservation is also a critical challenge for engineers.

Many service engineers have come to realise that water must be a key component of the service that they provide and that their clients are becoming increasingly concerned about patterns of water consumption and waste in their buildings.

This article looks at the work of a team of three young engineers from Buro Happold, who have been honoured by the Society of Public Health Engineers (SOPHE) for a project that they developed at their offices, in Bath, aiming to establish a best practice regime in water management.

CIBSE Journal. February 2009 (Pg. 40-41)

Web Resources

T-Zero

T-Zero is a free internet tool that provides independent sustainable refurbishment advice to users, with the option of linking directly to suppliers, manufacturers, and installers of any measures chosen.

The tool guides users through a series of simple steps and is designed for those refurbishing their own homes, homes they manage, or the homes of clients.

Still in the Beta testing phase at present, T-Zero aims to release a fully tested v1.0 tool in May 2009.

<http://www.tzero.org.uk/>

Events

Ecobuild

3/4/5 March 2009

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 www.ecobuild.co.uk

ParkCity conference

23-24 March 2009

The three core themes for ParkCity are leadership, partnership, and delivery.

Strong leadership involves having the courage to think differently. Now is the time to reappraise how we invest in existing communities. This event aims to provide a forum to meet and discover people and ideas that help take projects forward.

ParkCity will highlight what can be learnt from successful places that are shaping their environment in smart and positive ways.

The conference is targeted at strategic decision makers working within local and regional government including Planning, Highways, Housing, Economic regeneration and development, Community development and engagement, and Health, Plus other organisations who work alongside them including Developers, Urban designers and architects, Strategic health authorities, and Charities.

Venue - Dexter House, No 2 Royal Mint Court, Tower Hill, London, EC3N 4QN

Contact - 020 8481 3349, or visit <http://www.parkcity.org.uk>

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