

Green Construction Roundup

July, 2009 No. 185

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Construction News

Industry in arms over six month delay to sustainability code

The government has been in talks with housebuilders, aiming to simplify assessments under the Code for Sustainable Homes, following complaints that it is taking up to six months to get a certificate after submitting data.

Building. 31 July (Pg. 15)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3145961>

Design competition for eco towns mothballed

A competition promised by the government to help find the best designs for its flagship eco-towns initiative has been mothballed. As part of the scheme, four sites were chosen to become eco-towns; the masterplanners included Farrells, Alan Baxter and Associates and Bill Dunster's Zed Factory. However, design watchdog Cabe will now expand its design review panel to include more sustainability experts in an effort to properly scrutinise the standard of the new towns.

Building Design. 24 July (Pg. 3)

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3145561>

Cooling system change to push up 2012 costs

Costs on the 2012 Olympic stadium and aquatics centre are likely to rise further after a recommendation by the Games' sustainability watchdog that their cooling systems be reworked. The Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 first recommended these plans be reviewed in 2007.

Building Design. 24 July (Pg. 10)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3145503>

New zero carbon definition cuts costs of home by £11K

Developers will need to spend an extra £11,000, rather than the £22,000 previously calculated, on making a new semi-detached house carbon neutral under the definition of zero-carbon newly unveiled by the government. Cyril Sweett had estimated that a home would cost between £18,350 and £21,750 more, going by the original definition of zero-carbon in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Building Design. 24 July (Pg. 13)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3145515>

Grow your own skyscraper

Three young German architects are designing structures made completely out of living trees, including a pavilion for concerts in downtown Stuttgart. However, designing the ultimate treehouse turns out to be trickier than one might expect.

Spiegel Online International. 22 July

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,636716,00.html#ref=nlint>

Rice concrete can cut greenhouse emissions

A new way of processing rice husks for use in concrete could lead to a boom in green construction. Rice husks form small cases around edible kernels of rice and are rich in silicon dioxide, an essential ingredient in concrete. Scientists have recognized the potential value of rice husks as a building material for decades, but past attempts to burn it produced an ash too contaminated with carbon to be useful as a cement substitute. A team of researchers have figured out a way to make nearly carbon-free rice husk ash. Heating husks to 800 degrees centigrade (1,472 degrees Fahrenheit) in an oxygen-free furnace drives off carbon, leaving fine particles of nearly pure silica behind. The process emits some CO₂, but it's carbon neutral

iCivilEngineer.com 13 July

<http://www.icivilengineer.com/News/news.php?id=8959>

More must be done to hit wind targets

Several short pieces looking at the efforts of industry to meet government wind energy targets: Capital costs undermine offshore wind farms; Engineers warn ports must invest more to support the offshore wind industry; and Europe needs a supergrid.

New Civil Engineer. 02 July (Pg. 6-7)

Periodical Articles

Uttlesford: the council trialling consequential improvements

Consequential improvements, part of the latest reform of Part L of the Building Regulations, have been dropped. The idea was to make homeowners upgrade the energy efficiency of their entire property when they built extensions.

According to a 2006 survey, the Essex district of Uttlesford has the highest carbon emissions per household in the UK. So, on 1 April 2006, the council, taking things into its own hands, made Uttlesford the only council in the country where householders had to spend up to 10% of the budget for their building works improving the energy efficiency of their existing home as a condition of planning.

This second in the 'L is for...' series looks at how one small council in Essex has shown that not only can change happen, but that it may even be popular.

Building. 31 July (Pg. 28-30)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=583&storycode=3145940>

Sustainability in practice – Low carbon building

Article looking at AJ figures for annual emissions data from buildings which have been featured in the magazine. However, less than half of the architects concerned have provided this data.

The article also gives results for the six building types with the lowest predicted annual emissions. It also lists those practices that provided no data to the study, even though they said they would.

Architects Journal. 30 July (Pg. 33-36)

L is for...

Historic buildings may soon be no longer exempt from Part L. Buried in the 800 page consultation for Part L:2010 is a proposal to scrap the listed and conservation area buildings, ancient monuments and churches exemption from the regulations; historic buildings were included in the 2006 version.

This would mean that the type and extent of energy efficiency improvements taking place during historic building refurbishment would be decided through the local authority conservation officer, building control and the project team. This, first of a three part series of articles, looks at the possible implications for the construction industry.

Building. 24 July (Pg. 38-40)

Tellytubby land: BedZed revisited

When Peabody's BedZed, the UK's first zero-carbon housing scheme was completed in 2001, it lit the blue touch paper that blasted zero carbon towards the top of the housing agenda. At the time, zero-carbon housing was the vision of a handful of idealists parked on the fringes of the mainstream industry. Social housing provider Peabody brought this vision closer to the centre in the form of the first serious attempt to make zero-carbon living practical at development level.

Article asking; is it all that it was cracked up to be? Covers: Energy problems; Design aspirations; How Bedzed is holding up generally; and How green the Bedzed life really is.

Building. 03 July (Pg. 34-39)

<http://www.building.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=3143919>

Learning from passive action

Acharacle Primary, opened in Scotland is believed to be the UK's first PassivHaus school, designed and built with an external fabric that exceeds the low energy standards.

The seven year project was the innovation of Gaia Architects, who see Acharacale as a major pilot in the UK and key to persuading manufacturers to offer PassivHaus materials.

This article looks at the school and how the PassivHaus standards compare to UK new-build common practice.

Building Sustainable Design. July 2009 (Pg. 29-31)

Web Resources

CIBSE design Compass

The CIBSE "Design Compass" is an online tool to assist professionals involved in building design to incorporate weather/climate related information into a clearly defined framework. It provides a common methodology, supported by a database of information related to the design process.

The Home page of the site features the design areas (Heating, Cooling, Ventilation etc.) where weather information is relevant. The user is guided to a series of design tasks and the information to assist in the completion of these, within a framework defined by a generic design process. For further information, and to use the CIBSE Design Compass, visit

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

Events

The Carbon Show

29 - 30 September (Tuesday/Wednesday)

The Carbon Show aims to address the future of the carbon markets and aims to help global organisations manage their carbon emissions more effectively.

Featuring a comprehensive range of exhibitors and an interactive seminar programme, the show will offer a wealth of expertise and insight, and provide networking opportunities for the carbon management and trading communities.

Venue – ExCeL, London

For further information and to pre-register for free entry to the exhibition, visit

<http://www.thecarbonshow.com>

Eco Innovate 09

21 October (Wednesday)

Business-to-business event promoting the use of innovative, environmental solutions. Eco Innovate will provide the opportunity for businesses in the private and public sector to learn more about how innovative solutions from the Low Carbon Environmental Goods and Services sector can help them meet these challenges.

Alongside the main exhibition there will also be an array of activities, including a conference of high profile speakers, seminars, an innovation lab, a 'dragon's den' style eco innovator panel and an opportunity to maximise networking opportunities by pre-arranged one-to-one networking sessions.

Venue - Towerlands Park, Braintree, Essex

For more information and to book delegate and exhibition places, visit

<http://www.ecoinnovate.co.uk>

How green is green - environmental profiling explained

26 October (Monday) 4-6pm

BRE Global - free event, discussing how to validate claims about the environmental performance of building products. BRE experts will explain the assessment process of the Environmental Profiles Certification Scheme, established to provide ongoing independent, third party assessment and certification of construction materials and products for their environmental performance.

Venue - BRE, Watford

For more information please contact: Helen Ball, Tel +44 (0)1923 664303, E-mail, ballh@bre.co.uk; or to book online visit

<http://www.bre.co.uk/events>

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