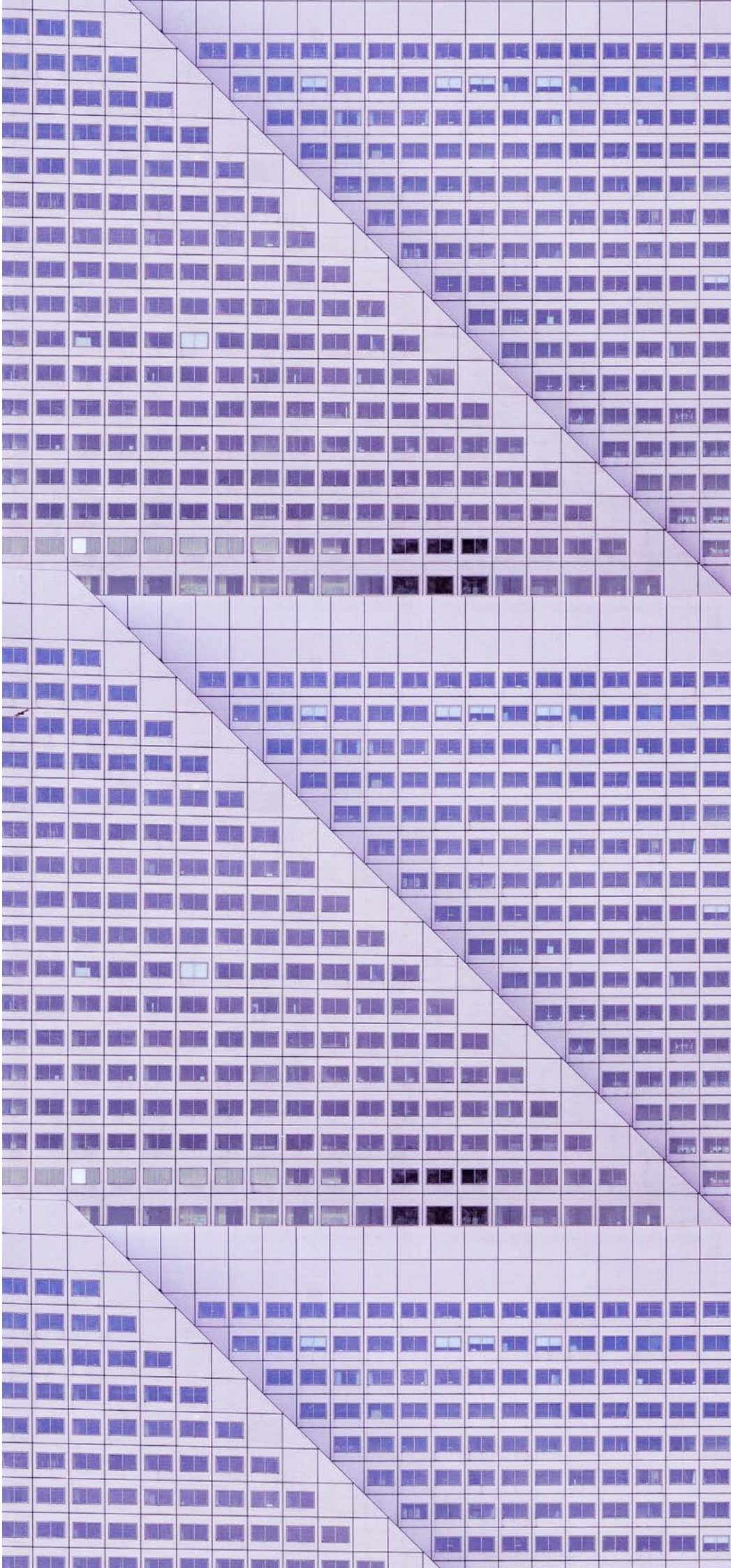
Architectural Technology Journal



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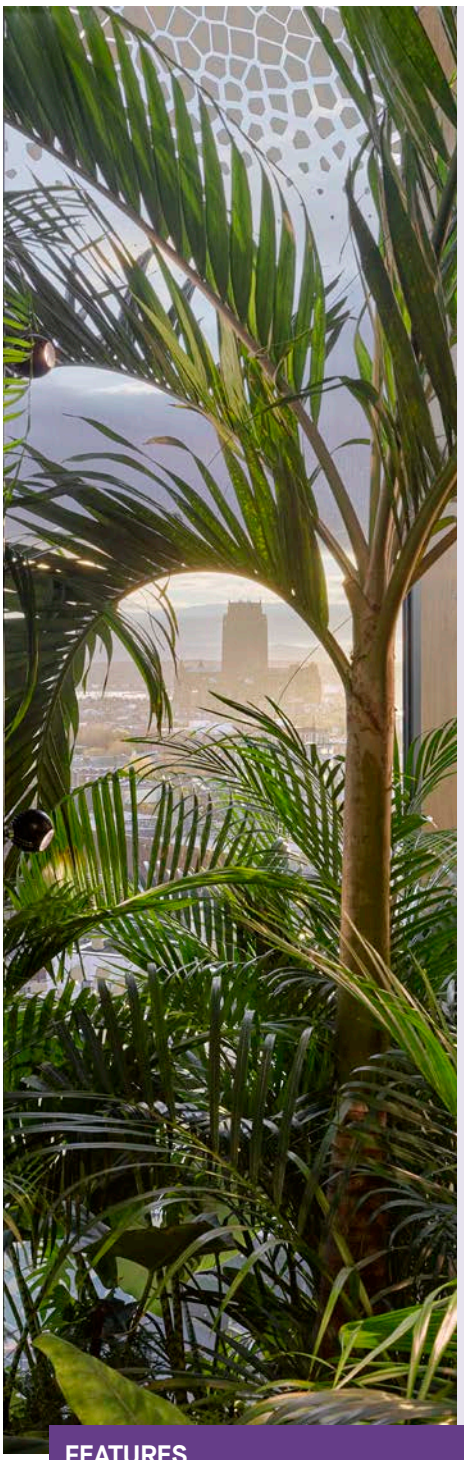

Editor's welcome

It might feel far too late to say this, but given this is our first issue of the year, I think a "Happy New Year" is in order. So, Happy New Year, all! I hope 2025 has been treating you well so far, and you're feeling ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities the rest of this year will bring.

Right, now that's out the way, let's get onto this issue of *ATJ*. Following the call for nominations for our Honorary Officer elections in our last issue, we've given the candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves, tell you what they stand for, and let you know why they should be elected. These Chartered Architectural Technologists are volunteering to give their enthusiasm, experience, strategic leadership, skills and time to the work of the Institute, set within the Strategic Plan.

One of the core aims of the Strategic Plan is to raise the profile of our profession. In January, CIAT published the Architectural Technology document, which defines the profession and discipline for the general public in clear, easy to understand language. This will help in further promoting and legitimising Architectural Technology.

Already this year, ATs have been fighting more fiercely than ever for recognition and understanding in both the built environment and the wider world. In February, Liam Briggs MCIAT posted a passionate post on LinkedIn ruing the times he has been confused with a technician, with people not respecting or understanding the education, training, and experience needed to be a Chartered AT. "It's time for a shift in recognition," he says. "Let's start with the right terminology."

In my exclusive interview with Chris Halligan MCIAT, Chair of the Climate Society (p. 34), he expresses his frustration with ATs historically having to "play second fiddle" to architects, and the flaws in current trends and legislation, despite ATs' skillsets being uniquely suited to tackle the climate and housing crises. His passion for what the Society can do, and why members should join, I found infectious, and it left me with the feeling that the narrative is and will continue to changing.

So how do we bring about this change? One of the major ways is through engagement with politicians and policymakers, and in this issue you will find the first of a regular write-up from our Policy and External Affairs Team about what they've been up to this quarter (p. 36). The update will keep you engaged with developments in the UK and across the world that concern Architectural Technology as the team continues to raise the profile and professional standing of the discipline.

Elsewhere this issue, we have an in-depth article evaluating fire safety in living wall systems from James Hanna MCIAT (p. 6). We also have internal articles on how you can get involved in our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and keep developing your knowledge and skillset (p. 38), as well as an informative article on the publication of the new Professional Standards Competency Framework (PSCF) and what this means for the profession and the Institute (p. 16).

Well then, until next time – wishing you wealth and wisdom in the Year of the Snake! See you in the summer.

Tim Fraser
Deputy Editor

CIAT
INSURANCE SERVICES

What would you do if you suffered a cyber attack?

Architectural Technologists may be exposed to cyber incidents from a variety of sources- ranging from your use of Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) through emails, databases, cloud storage and more.

Given the impact that any cyber attack can have on a business, the main benefit of a cyber insurance policy is the immediate assistance of specialists to ensure your business is back up and running. They will also assist with the consequences of an attack in terms of both your legal and regulatory obligations.

This service alone makes cyber insurance an essential purchase to ensure minimum disruption to your firm, your clients and ensuring any reputational damage is avoided / kept to a minimum.

Another factor to consider is that most standard business insurance policies contain an exclusion that removes all cover from a cyber event. For those few policies, where cover remains, cover will at the most be limited to third party losses and will not assist your firm with the required support and assistance.

CIAT Insurance Services have seen an increase in firms of all sizes across completely different sectors become the victims of a cyber attack. While there is a perception that smaller firms are less likely to be targeted, the sad reality is that any business is now a target.

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- Immediate response from specialist cyber experts, who assess, provide solutions and advice to ensure you are operational again as soon as possible.
- Restoration of your systems and data after an attack and assistance in identifying and resolving the breach source.
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If you would like to discuss cyber insurance further, please contact:

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How wet is your wall? An evaluation of fire safety in living wall systems, exploring emerging trends in the use of green walls on tall buildings

Words by James Hanna MCIAT, Todd Architects

Architectural and design practices, keen to utilise the many benefits of a green wall on their project are faced with a challenge: add a green wall and you add the increased risk of fire spreading across the outer surface of your building. So how does that work with compliance, regulations and guidance documents? What about the additional design considerations for tall buildings? Green walls, also known as living walls, are finding their way onto larger and taller buildings. However, this trend might seem contradictory considering the increased scrutiny on external cladding products.

The issue remains unavoidable: Plants are combustible. The frequent media coverage of wildfires, and their devastating consequences, would reinforce the notion of rapid-fire propagation in plants that is then very challenging to control.

Designers should therefore carefully assess whether the pursuit of the numerous benefits associated with greening is overshadowing the additional inherent risks related to potential fire propagation inherent to living walls. With added significance in the case of tall buildings, a comprehensive understanding of the risks is essential.

So how then are green walls being permitted for use when other façade products that would very likely perform better in reaction to fire testing are prohibited for use over certain heights and in particular locations? An examination of the fire certification and test reports available from the main system suppliers uncovers a narrative that is not as widely recognised as it ought to be.

It reveals that green walls cannot achieve a full reaction to fire classification when tested in accordance with BS EN 13501-01, which would enable designers and review bodies to determine if a product meets the current guidance as shown in Approved Document B, with regards to height and building use.

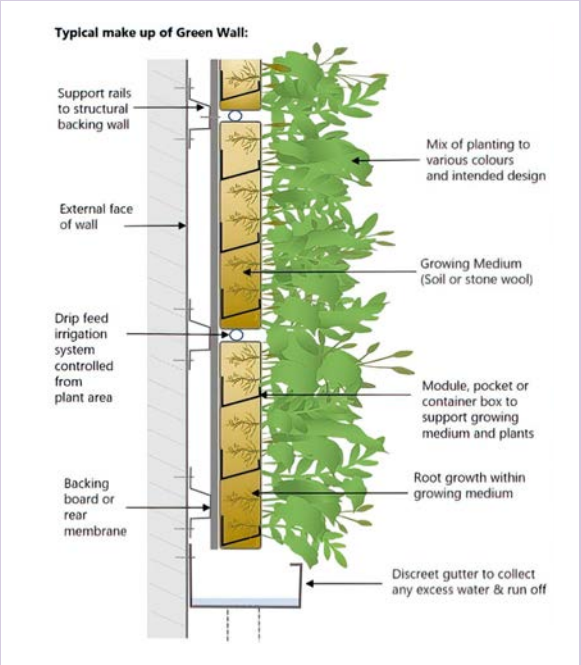
Yet, surprisingly, some prominent system suppliers are boldly and unashamedly claiming that their system holds a fully tested classification (typically class B), despite this being unattainable. Unfortunately, this claim is being mistakenly accepted as factual.

The Fire Engineering Assessments (FEAs) provided as evidential support by suppliers reveal that certain aspects of the formal testing criteria, such as conditioning and crucial dimensional consistency, are disregarded. Instead, green walls are soaked and completely saturated before undergoing the key laboratory fire testing, which has a significant impact on the results.

This “ad-hoc” testing approach, as described in detail in each FEA, is by itself questionable, and the “wet and test” method to produce a so called “likely” reaction to fire rating is strictly prohibited for other façade products.

In addition to this, the current FEA approach to fire performance for living walls generates supplementary requirements (as well as additional costs) for both the initial design and then throughout the life of any living wall installation.

Any installation that is approved for use on tall buildings, based upon the “likely” classification opinion of an FEA document, must also be: (a) Managed, (b) Maintained, and (c) Continually Monitored to remain exactly in the “perfect” condition, mirroring what was tested in the lab. Otherwise, the Fire Engineering Assessment is deemed invalid, and the reaction to fire performance of the installed living wall is unknown.



Typical living wall benefits

Beyond giving designers an exciting option to create natural and eye-catching facades, with variations in depth, pattern and colour, these installations can also include many functional benefits. These include improving biodiversity, removing pollutants from the air, improving the thermal performance of both new and existing structures, while also providing a natural cooling effect to the surface. There is also an increase in the overall acoustic performance when a living wall system is added to an external wall. Having plants and vegetation, especially in built up urban areas or in healthcare environments, can also improve mental health and healing.

Despite persistent inquiries and attending supplier CPD sessions, little evidence has been found to show that all the stringent and fundamental criteria outlined in the FEAs is being given the required high priority or being effectively and correctly communicated to designers by the system suppliers.

Furthermore, recently published videos showcasing extended fire testing of living wall systems have unsurprisingly shown that plants burn well. Even for green and healthy vegetation, as the heat from the fire source dries parts of the wall above, the spread can be very rapid.

This has significant shortcomings in the existing testing procedures. These videos suggest that the third-party Fire Engineering Assessments, used to permit living wall use on tall buildings, rely on limited data from small scale tests, which do not necessarily reflect real-world installations.

While the importance of maintenance is championed, suppliers are not addressing the key requirement of accurate monitoring of moisture levels within the installed plant modules. This monitoring obligation is being explained as “you could do it”, rather than “you must do it”. The stipulation of constant monitoring of moisture levels is critical to fire spread, but this is not typically being implemented on each and every installation, as is required by the FEA.

When is a class B, not a class B?

A review of the available systems on the UK & Ireland markets, shows that a typical “likely reaction” result, via an FEA for a fully saturated living wall, would be Class “B” with some variation in the Smoke designation (s1,s2,s3) and the droplets designation (d0, d1, d2) between the different systems. This variation is dependent upon the plants, the material of the plant modules (commonly plastic) and the growing mediums used.

As per table 12.1, this immediately rules out potential use of any living walls on Relevant buildings that require a min class A2-s1,d0. But the suggested ‘Class B’ rating of living walls would potentially allow use of these systems on the external surface of buildings of any height when the potential building use would be offices, Multi Storey Car Parks and some low rise residential. This is where we see living walls on many of the recent installations.

The major problem here is that is that the “Likely class B”, is fully dependent upon the condition of the installation being as what the FEA describes as “Perfect” and then it must remain fully saturated at all times. Any variation of the condition, such as a drop in moisture content below the tested levels, invalidates the FEA.

Examples of fully or partially failed walls, as depicted in the image of the living wall on the next page, are not uncommon due to the inherent challenge in all vertical planting of retaining moisture and preventing local drying out of the growing medium.

In the image, the portion labelled “A” may potentially meet the ad-hoc test criteria and attain the minimum moisture level for the system; however, without an active method of accurately monitoring percentage moisture content (%MC), how could you tell?

Furthermore, a fire emanating from the window below could rapidly decrease the moisture content and impact the reaction to fire performance. This would not typically be the case with other cladding products subject to the full BS EN 13501-1 criteria.

A further key question is: Are the moisture levels across the wall on this particular project example and any others accurately known? If not, why not?

Table 12.1 Reaction to fire performance of external surface of walls

Building type	Building height	Less than 1000mm from the relevant boundary	1000mm or more from the relevant boundary
‘Relevant buildings’ as defined in regulation 7(4) (see paragraph 12.15)		Class A2-s1, d0[1] or better	Class A2-s1, d0[1] or better
All ‘residential’ purpose groups (purpose groups I and 2)	More than 11m	Class A2-s1, d0[1] or better	Class A2-s1, d0[2] or better
	11m or less	Class B-s3, d2[2] or better	No provisions
Assembly and recreation	More than 18m	Class B-s3, d2[2] or better	From ground level to 18m: class C-s3, d2[2] or better
			From 18m in height and above: class B-s3, d2[2] or better
	18m or less	Class B-s3, d2[2] or better	Up to 10m above ground level: class C-s3, d2[2] or better
			Up to 10m above a roof or any part of the building to which the public have access: class C-s3, d2[2] or better[4]
			From 10m in height and above: no minimum performance
Any other building	More than 18m	Class B-s3, d2[2] or better	From ground level to 18m: class C-s3, d2[2] or better
			From 18m in height and above: class B-s3, d2[2] or better
	18m or less	Class B-s3, d2[2] or better	No provisions

Snapshot of Table 12.1 (ADB V2) or the matching Table 10.1 (ADB V1) which advises on the minimum reaction to fire performance for materials to be used on the external surface of the building, dependant on type and height. These classifications must come from a full BS EN 13501-1 test procedure.

One example of a UK living wall installation with obvious variations in condition. The part marked at "B" is likely to fall well outside the condition of the lab tested samples and likely to surpass the minimum surface spread of flame requirement of ADB as it could be a class D or even an E!

Part "B" would not be considered valid in any of the FEA documents reviewed, yet here we have it on the surface of a modern building.

The opinion given in a fire engineering assessment stands or falls upon the minimum moisture content being met. If a section of this living wall was to be tested, it would very likely not achieve a "Class B". Is this particular wall, and any others with similar issues, therefore compliant with regulations in its current state?

The conditioning problem is not always visually obvious which is another reason why the saturation method of testing is problematic. An apparently healthy-looking wall with a lower moisture content will enable significantly quicker fire spread as it is the moisture within the system that provides protection from fire for both the foliage and the commonly used plastic plant support modules.

Side by side testing carried out by Prof Wojciech Węgrzyński, Jakub Bielawski and the team at ITB shows that there is a significant increase in fire spread across living walls with a marginally lower moisture content or for a wall rapidly dried and fuelled by the wind.

Snapshots of videos captured at 6 mins and 30 secs after initial ignition, showing the difference between dry plants (left) and live plants (right).

Snapshots of videos captured at 6 mins and 30 sec after initial ignition, , showing the difference between a windy, exterior environment (left) and an interior environment (right).

This confirms that a detailed and specific green wall testing regime is very much needed.

The videos indicate that the flames quickly spread across the face for each of the samples tested, with the differences being limited to time of flame spread. These are much more realistic conditions for green walls when used externally and at higher levels. Within minutes of the tests starting, there was significant fire spread as shown in the images.

This raises additional doubts about the practice of omitting crucial aspects of BS EN 13501-1 testing and saturating a wall to attain a so called "Class B" rating which has clearly opened the door (and the market) for use of green walls on tall buildings. The Luton MSCP fire has also raised doubts about the common practice of green wall installations on car parks via an apparent Class B. Compared to other façade products achieving a full class B rating, living walls have been shown to be significantly inferior in preventing fire spread. It is evident: green walls have the potential to ignite and burn effectively.

As the reaction to fire properties of the living wall system can rapidly change as demonstrated in the larger scale tests of both wet and dry walls, the stated "likely class B" designation for these systems would appear to be dubious.

The lack of adequate monitoring

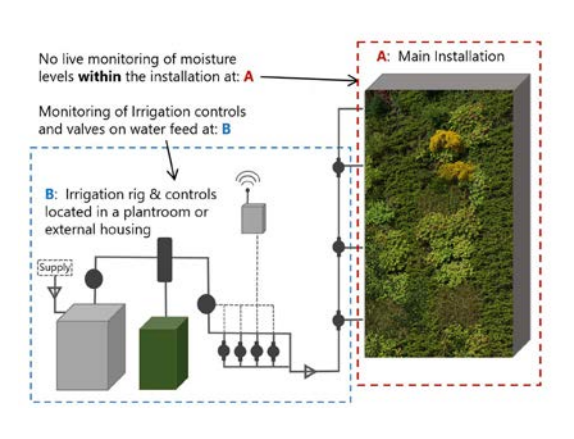
Construction products given a fire classification rating are expected to perform as tested in a fire even if fully dry. As living walls will perform differently dependent upon the moisture content, the FEA will stipulate that they must be "constantly monitored" and irrigated as required to prevent them from falling below the minimum permitted level. The minimum stated levels for saturated ad-hoc tested walls varies depending on the growing medium used, with some systems being as low as 40% minimum moisture content (soil) and some being closer to 70% of volume (mineral wool).

The lab method of doing this (measuring by weight of modules before and after saturation) is not practically possible for almost all project installations, so therefore some other method is required to confirm the actual percentage level. It is worth noting that test labs set the minimum levels, but no guidance is given as to how this should be achieved.

The current monitoring method that the main system suppliers suggest is computerised management of flow rates from the irrigation system, and this is now typically standardised across most of the available marketed systems. This method does not confirm the exact moisture level of the substrate itself or give accurate

readings of moisture content percentage levels (%MC). Flow rates can be finely tuned, with published daily data readings being produced for the volume of water being pumped to the wall that can be remotely adjusted if required. While this form of monitoring is essential in plant health, it falls short in meeting the requirements of the Fire Engineering Assessments that set a minimum level.

This is because all current monitoring happens primarily 'bit side' as per location (B) on the below diagram, which represents a typical installation. Flow rate monitoring happens on the irrigation feed pipes for the system, usually located in the plant room or on the supply lines.



While a potential issue with a leaking, damaged pipe or blockage may be flagged up by a pressure drop indication when using this method, there is not an accurate method being applied to most installations to constantly monitor the wall itself, within the plant modules. This should happen at location (A) to confirm an actual moisture figure, (%MC) which is a clearly determined stipulation of the validity of the supporting FEA document.

As the fire engineering assessments set out a minimum level in percentage terms that the installed wall must achieve (as per testing), again logic would suggest that to understand if this minimum level is being met for each project, the actual moisture level (%MC) in the wall must therefore be known.

It is typically not.

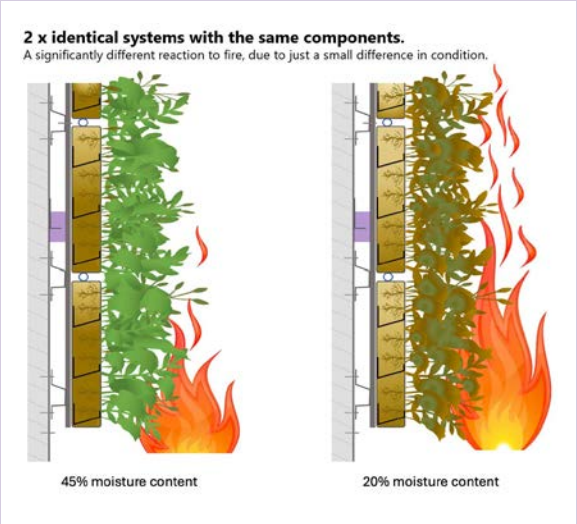
Advanced moisture sensor technology is commonly employed in commercial agriculture and vertical farming to manage plants. However, through research and conversations with suppliers, this technology is generally not being implemented in most living wall installations.

When the moisture percentage is not monitored accurately, the probable fire reaction classification for the wall also remains uncertain and potentially non-compliant.

A straightforward comparison to highlight the shortfalls in flow rate monitoring would be the process of refuelling a typical car. While each fuel pump precisely measures the amount of fuel in litres passing through the nozzle into the car's tank, this measurement is entirely independent of consumption, impacted by the journeys you may undertake.

On a lengthy trip, your total fuel consumption will be much higher compared to a short one. If you attempted to maintain the fuel quantity above 50% (a half tank) in your car by solely pumping in a fixed amount of fuel each morning, you would encounter difficulties as this approach doesn't consider consumption. Fortunately, cars are equipped with a fuel sensor in the tank, providing real-time and accurate feedback.

Similarly, merely knowing the volume of litres passing through a living walls irrigation system doesn't account for local daily environmental conditions that can reduce moisture levels within the installation. While you could try to make an estimation, without a precise measurement method, you simply cannot have certainty. FEAs require that a certain minimum level is always met.



For designers, it is important to understand that the reaction to fire of a living wall system can be impacted by local environmental conditions such as dry weather and wind. As the moisture levels are reduced, so does any protection that this gives against fire spread.

This may not always be obvious to spot.

Take the living wall challenge

Just how wet is your wall?

If you have been involved in a project with a living wall that has been approved for use on a tall building via this non-standard ad-hoc testing (as detailed within each system's FEA), then the likelihood is that this is fully dependent upon the moisture content remaining above a stated minimum level.

If so, ask what the moisture content (% level) of the living wall is today? This should be known by whoever is managing the wall and should be relatively easy to find as it is the critical element of the Fire Engineering Assessment.

Is this level above the minimal levels in the systems FEA? These documents should also be readily available.

If this information is not readily available or known for your project, the FEA for the system is likely invalid and the reaction to fire classification for the installation is therefore not known.

It is worth noting that Approved Document B (ADB) refers to an additional document for best practice guidance which is the "Fire Performance of Green Roofs and Walls, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government" document (published Aug 2013.)

A careful read of this document shows that it contains some outdated information and diagrams which have been superseded in recent updates to ADB. As is now widely being highlighted by fire safety specialists, this documents overall relevance today is questionable, and the contradictions contained within it

are unhelpful to those tasked with reviewing green walls today.

Rather than providing additional and much needed clarity, this document adds to the confusion. It notes that the green walls on the market at the time of writing and that were tested before this publication, all failed the relevant testing, and that further guidance is therefore needed.

Myth busting

There have been various ideas suggested to address the logical fire concerns that come when putting known combustible materials onto the outside of buildings. Some of these appear to have stuck and have been incorporated within recently installed green walls.

But do they satisfy the current regulations and guidance or are they just a good idea?

"We can hook up the living wall irrigation system to the fire alarm".

The idea here is that in the event of a fire, the building's fire alarm activating would send a signal to the irrigation system. This would then irrigate or "drench" the wall which would then reduce its likelihood to catch fire.

The obvious question here is: where is the testing to prove that this works? Any building, or part of a building, that is reliant on a sprinkler or other fire suppression system is required to be designed by qualified and experienced specialists and be certified and commissioned. Green wall irrigation systems are pressurised drip systems to evenly distribute water and nutrients to the plants in a controlled manner. They are not proper fire suppression systems. While there is a likely benefit, this is not a requirement of the regulations for external facades, nor is it an alternative pathway to allow products that fall short of the test standards to be used.

Also, if the wall meets the required reaction to fire performance in the first place, why would this even be suggested by suppliers? The suggestion to do this in fact further highlights that the inherent risk with living walls becoming a source for fire spread, is a major problem.

"We have done this on dozens of projects, of similar height and size to yours".

While this once held much weight, the industry must now be fully aware that just because something was done (or permitted) on a previous project, this is no guarantee that those involved in the approval process got everything right, especially with regards to fire.

It is imperative for all stakeholders in the design process to thoroughly scrutinise and question both living walls and the associated documents submitted for approval, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the potential risks.

Suppliers should refrain from overstating the "likely" classification achieved through the Fire Engineering Assessment and ad-hoc testing process in both discussions and publications.

Designers must fully understand the risks and FEA stipulations to be able to make informed design decisions. They must comprehend the implications of deviating from standard fire testing procedures of products and the complete reliance of moisture within the system to limit fire spread.

"A healthy wall is a safe wall".

This simplified claim would suggest that maintenance contracts are therefore the silver bullet for fire safety. While regular maintenance is essential for plant health, it alone falls short of showing regulatory compliance.

Current maintenance contracts include live flow rate monitoring of the irrigation system (during work hours) and consists of a monthly or a bi-monthly visit to do a full visual inspection of the installation and irrigation equipment. This tends to be quite thorough and includes the replacement of any unhealthy or dead plants as and where necessary. It helps, but still falls short of carrying out the FEA stipulation of "constant monitoring of the moisture levels" to confirm the likely reaction to fire performance of the system.

Variations in weather and other factors can influence the health of the wall, even over a short timescale, which is why maintenance is needed in the first place as some parts of the wall may not thrive. As demonstrated by full scale testing, even healthy-looking walls, when subject to a realistic fire load, will quickly dry out, enabling fire to spread rapidly over the surface. The more moisture, the slower the spread as the plants will take longer to dry but overall, spread is only slowed rather than "resisting fire spread" which is the overarching intention of B4.

This simplified assertion being put forth by suppliers that "a healthy living wall is a safe living wall" currently lacks substantial evidential support. This notion parallels the "it does not burn, it just chars" claim made in relation to insulation products, which is now proven to be misleading. For designers tasked with navigating the complexities of these systems and fire safety, caution must be taken with such claims.

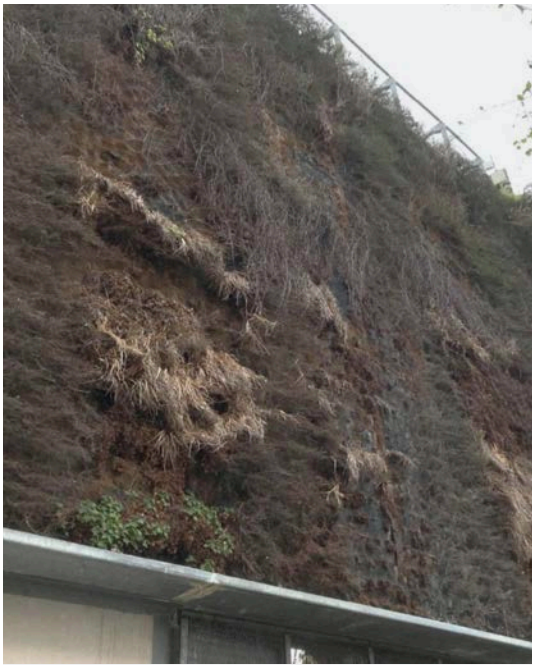
The problem with failure

Green walls can fail and inevitably we will see increased examples of this as more are installed. So where does that leave us?

Living wall system suppliers are rightly passionate about their installations looking good and will endeavour to secure the maintenance contract. Unfortunately, they are also in a position where they cannot guarantee that their maintenance contract will be renewed or that a client will not "turn off the tap" for some unknown reason. This creates a unique and bizarre situation with regards to regulatory guidance for living walls.

The reality is illustrated through these contrasting images showing a living wall in its first year and, on the following page, the same wall recently.

Year 1



Year 10

Once the jewel of this mixed-use and multi award winning community project, for whatever unknown reasons within the last twelve months, the irrigation system appears to be switched off and no maintenance has taken place.

While it is undeniably disheartening to witness these outcomes, this project, along with some other prominent and more widely publicised cases, do serve as a reminder that although failed living walls may be relatively uncommon, there remains the potential for them to deteriorate and dry out: factors beyond the control of system suppliers.

At times, either the entirety of a living wall or a specific localised sections may not thrive, and the result will be a highly flammable outer surface. This situation presents a challenging dilemma concerning regulatory guidance, necessitating further clarification to for allowing parts of a building to deviate from the requirements set out in Approved Document B.

Going forward: suitability for tall buildings?

Urban greening is important, and living walls clearly offer an excellent means of achieving this goal.

However, the current pathway permitting their installation at any height on certain buildings (via table 12.1), using the wet-it-and-test-it method to achieve a purported "likely class B" designation, requires further scrutiny.

Additionally, designers need clear guidance on how ad-hoc "likely classifications" should be managed. Presently, some consider them to be fully equivalent to a BS EN 13501-1 tested product, a perspective that seems to have inherent flaws, especially for living wall systems, given the potential for a rapid decline of fire performance linked to change of condition, as evidenced in the larger scale testing.

Furthermore, it is crucial to recognise that the current design review scenario is inherently flawed, where both designers and review bodies are heavily reliant on the claims being made in suppliers' own documentation for these so-called Class B systems, but do not then have clear regulatory guidance on how this information should be interpreted.

A review of living wall installations on tall buildings to confirm that all stipulations within their system FEA are being met is a must.

For the time being, it may be prudent to limit the design and installation of Living Walls to areas where the associated risks are less. This approach could prioritise projects such as low-rise buildings, creating distinct breaks between planted areas and avoiding use on taller buildings altogether, despite the potential unpopularity of this.

This cautious approach should remain until further testing, clear and comprehensive guidance, along with specific regulations, have been firmly established for living walls.

Numerous opportunities do exist at lower levels on most construction projects for incorporating urban greening, and there are numerous recent successful examples to draw inspiration from.

Based upon recent larger scale testing, it is evident that urgent changes are necessary. Those involved in the approval process must be adequately educated about the associated risks and the limitations with the current lab tests.

Regarding design, plant support systems should be reviewed to remove any combustible materials or components from both the support framing and the planting systems, replacing them with non-combustible alternatives. This will reduce reliance of moisture within the system for protection. Some emerging systems on the market that prioritise fire-safe designs for the entire system are currently doing this.

With the necessary talent, technology, and expertise within the industry, there is a strong potential to develop a well-defined large scale testing process and a set of much needed standards for green walls. This testing should also identify and provide design guidance for external breaks and barriers within the planting. ■

From analytics to action: using technology to empower communities

Words by Alejandro Quinto, Head of Innovation, Yeme Tech

As society evolves at an unprecedented pace, cities often struggle to adapt their decision-making processes, creating a growing disconnect that directly impacts communities. This disconnection leads to a loss of identity, further compounded by the rapid rise of AI and data-driven technologies – tools that, paradoxically, hold the key to bridging this gap.

We need to be committed to reimagining urban planning and design, and craft ways in which the needs, objectives and aspirations of communities are reflected. Society is transforming faster than ever before, reshaping how we live, work, and interact. Yet, many places are struggling to adapt, leading to a widening disconnect between urban environments, the systems designed to support them, and the communities they serve. Over the past decades, this gap has grown, with towns and cities losing touch with the needs and aspirations of their residents.

The result is a fragmentation of identity, rising feelings of loneliness and exclusion, and significant impacts on health and well-being. In England, the Community Life Survey conducted by the UK Government in 2023 and 2024 revealed that 61% of adults reported a strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighborhood. This also highlights a concerning reality: nearly 40% of individuals feel disconnected from their local communities. This divide underscores the pressing challenge of fostering social cohesion in rapidly changing urban environments, where evolving societal dynamics risk further alienating individuals from the places they call home.

As urban planners, architects, and designers, we face the pressing challenge, and responsibility, of bridging this divide. The rise of AI and data-driven methodologies provides an opportunity to transform how we understand and shape our environments. These technologies have the capacity to help us navigate complexity, uncover patterns, and develop solutions that are more inclusive, sustainable, and – most importantly – aligned with the demands of communities. This approach not only addresses local needs but also supports the UK government's broader goal to digitise and standardise planning processes nationwide, ensuring a more efficient framework for urban planning.

At the heart of our work are communities, as has always been the case. And by default, every community is shaped by a very unique DNA. Shaped by its people, places and challenges. That is why our methodology is carefully designed to capture this uniqueness and translate the complexity of urban systems into a way that's understandable, precise and actionable.

Using highly sophisticated AI algorithms, data-driven

methodologies and GIS technology, Yeme Tech have developed an accurate and consistent approach to measure places. By integrating the principles of the 15-minute city, our methodology focuses on creating accessible, walkable neighborhoods that prioritise connectivity, quality of life and access to essential services.

Ultimately, this approach shifts the focus from merely solving problems to leveraging them as catalysts for new opportunities.

We leverage millions of data points from diverse sources, layering information on demographics, sustainability, infrastructure, social dynamics, and economic activity to create a comprehensive picture of a place. By establishing a baseline of the community characteristics, a granular understanding enables us to identify strengths, highlight gaps, and propose critical interventions linked to existing stakeholders, rather than doing generic interventions in the area. While real transformation only happens on the ground, our methodology ensures that efforts are directed where they are needed the most, maximising impact and driving community-centred change.

Data, in its raw form, holds immense potential, but its true value is unlocked only when it is transformed into actionable insights. Yeme Tech follows a thorough structured process to maximise the impact of data, making it a cornerstone of every project we undertake.

1. **We establish a baseline of the community characteristics:** We start by aggregating and analysing diverse datasets, layering all kinds of information we are able to collect such as demographics, evening economy, deprivation, sustainability, and economic activity (among many others) to gain a comprehensive understanding of a community's dynamics.
2. **We measure strengths and weaknesses, what's great about the place and what isn't. And how this has changed over time:** By identifying pockets of opportunity and areas of need, we highlight both the strengths that can be amplified and the gaps that require targeted intervention. In addition, we do this by looking at what's improved the most and what's being deteriorated.
3. **We identify key stakeholders and channel action:** We map out key stakeholders – from community groups to local businesses – that can act as catalysts for real change and align those with the community's priorities, creating a framework where every intervention is deeply rooted in local needs.

Our tools and services are designed to empower urban professionals to understand places and equip them with what they need to make an active and targeted design, unlocking the true potential of every place:

- The Community Data Platform: This intuitive tool integrates millions of data points to enable professionals to identify underserved areas, forecast scenarios, and align strategies with community priorities.
- Tailored reports: Bespoke reports provide targeted, strategic guidance by translating detailed analytics into actionable insights, empowering professionals to make informed decisions that foster long-term community resilience and wellbeing.

The methodology has enabled us to craft a strategic collaboration with the Planning Portal, the leading platform in the UK's urban planning landscape. This project, set to launch in the coming months, will allow users to access Yeme Tech's services for all planning applications across England, marking a significant step toward streamlining and enhancing the planning process.

The future of urban planning, at least from a tech perspective, lies in maximising the impact of data and into the standardisation of the different processes of planning. As AI continues to evolve, its capacity to analyse and predict patterns will enable even deeper insights into the needs of communities. By streamlining data into consistent frameworks, we can better define what makes a place "good", creating a shared language for planning and design teams, and directing this to core rooted organisations.

Availability of data from the community represents another exciting frontier. By involving residents in the data production process, taking advantage of the vast generation of data in our everyday lives, we can capture hyperlocal insights and foster a sense of ownership in the development process. Community participation not only uplifts places but also ensures that interventions are rooted in the realities of those who live there.

In conclusion, the successful integration of this methodology into existing planning systems will be pivotal for driving meaningful change. Our collaboration with the Planning Portal brings us closer to embedding this approach seamlessly into the planning journey, transforming it from concept to a tangible reality. By aligning innovative tools with real-world applications, we are one step closer to reshaping communities across England, fostering sustainable, inclusive, and impactful urban development. ■

Case study: Sixteen Passivhaus social homes benefit from heat pump service

Words by Baxi

A development of sixteen social homes designed and built to achieve Passivhaus standard has been constructed in Dalbeattie, Dumfries & Galloway, with the support of Baxi and its air source heat pump solutions and services.

To play its part in the delivery of these new net zero homes for Loreburn Housing Association, heating contractor James Frew Ltd required a solution that would provide sustainable heat to the properties: in this case, air source heat pumps.

The team then needed to find a strategic partner that would be able to offer the solutions and onsite support to implement the technology. Facing stringent design requirements to make the homes efficient and low carbon, James Frew Ltd partnered with Baxi to benefit from its full range of support services, training and efficient products.

Designed by architects Robert Potter and Partners and built by main contractor Ashleigh (Scotland) Ltd, the two and three-bedroom properties were to meet the highest standards of energy efficiency and comfort – part of Loreburn's commitment to delivering new homes fit for the future. This type of home will play a key role as local authorities and housing associations Loreburn look to deliver new homes in line with the New Build Heat Standard (Scotland) or Future Homes Standard.

Using the Passivhaus model, the entire home had to be designed around achieving the best energy efficiency as well as the heating source being a heat pump. This involved specifying not only the insulation and windows to meet the standard, but also the correctly sized heat pump for each home.

Space was also a consideration in the homes. The design needed to guarantee there was ample room for the internal and external elements of the heat pump solution, without compromising on comfort for tenants.

The James Frew team worked closely with Baxi's experts – Specification Manager Craig McVicar and Engineering Solutions Manager Ryan Kirkwood – to ensure the correct specification of heat pump for the design requirements of each house. Baxi's air source heat pumps, compatible cylinders and uSense controls were specified to provide the heating and hot water provision for each of the 16 homes through three radiators.

As part of Baxi's heat pump service, the team of engineers had access to the company's specialist training to allow them to become familiar with the specified solution and be confident in installing it before the project began. They also benefitted from expert support on site, ensuring the full system was designed correctly and could be installed within the space. Baxi's Commissioning Engineers, Michael Murray and Adam Stock, were on hand to oversee the commissioning of each of the heat pumps and make certain they would operate as expected once in place at each home.

Evan Peat, Senior Contract Manager at James Frew Ltd, said: "From tender to completion, it has been great to have the support of Baxi's expert service throughout the process. The design support and training meant the team had peace of mind that the most suitable products would be going into the homes and that our engineers were comfortable with the installation of them.

"It was also really important to have the support on site from Craig and Ryan. Having their expertise on the ground meant we were able to overcome this challenge and still meet the Passivhaus standard."

Rob Pearse, Director of Distribution Sales at Baxi UK, added: "This innovative project is a great example of how collaboration and consultation can result in amazing results for delivering net zero social housing. As heating solutions experts, we can work closely with social housing providers and their appointed contractors to consider the different approaches for low-carbon heating, selecting the most suitable combination of solutions for the application.

"Whether it is a new build project to Passivhaus standard like this one or decarbonising existing developments through retrofit, we are committed to providing the complete home service to our social housing clients."

Alison Maxwell, Project Delivery Officer for Loreburn HA commented "The standard of these homes is testament to Loreburn's commitment to building warm and highly energy efficient homes, where technology and intelligent design come together to create a sustainable future for our tenants".

Speaking about his experience of living in one of the properties, Alan Vinnie, a Loreburn tenant added "It'll really help to lower my energy bills which is a huge relief. You can really notice the change in the air and it's so quiet. I think all future builds should be of this quality". ■

Combating burnout with biophilic design

Words by Benholm Group

Burnout, characterised by chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed, is an escalating issue in today's fast-paced business environment. Symptoms include emotional exhaustion, reduced performance, and a feeling of detachment from one's job. As businesses seek sustainable solutions to this problem, the integration of biophilic design offers a promising avenue.

Biophilic design is more than just an aesthetic choice; it is grounded in substantial research that highlights the benefits of connecting people with nature. Studies such as 2023's 'Reap What You Sow' have shown that environments enriched with natural elements such as plants, natural materials, and access to daylight can significantly reduce stress, enhance cognitive function, and improve overall wellbeing.

How plants reduce burnout

1. **Improved air quality:** Plants are natural air purifiers, absorbing toxins and releasing oxygen. This improvement in air quality can lead to better concentration, reduced headaches, and fewer respiratory problems, all of which contribute to a more comfortable and less stressful working environment.
2. **Enhanced aesthetics:** The presence of greenery can make a workspace more visually appealing and inviting. This aesthetic enhancement can boost mood and create a sense of calm, making the workplace a more pleasant and inspiring place to be.
3. **Stress reduction:** The presence of plants has been shown to lower cortisol levels, the hormone associated with stress. This biological response helps employees feel more relaxed and less overwhelmed by their workloads.
4. **Boosted productivity:** Environments that incorporate natural elements have been linked to increased productivity. The calming effect of nature can help employees maintain focus and work more efficiently, reducing the likelihood of burnout.

Success stories

Brodies LLP, Edinburgh: With a total of 257 live plant displays installed, there is a tangible feeling of nature throughout this modern working space. The building benefits from a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating and EPC 'A' rating, meaning that it is highly sustainable and environmentally sound. "Promoting well-being at work was key to the success of our new, flexible workspace," Kay Quillan, Marketing Manager, commented. "Creative planting promotes that wellbeing, whilst complementing and enhancing the variety of workspaces."

Healthcare provider: Creating a more soothing atmosphere for both patients and staff, integrating biophilic elements into the facility's design, including a preserved moss wall and numerous potted plants, resulted in a significant decrease in reported burnout among staff and a more welcoming space for patients.

Implementing biophilic design in your workplace

For business owners looking to combat burnout and enhance their work environment, incorporating biophilic design can be a game-changer. Here are some steps to get started:

1. **Assess your space:** Evaluate your current office layout and identify areas where natural elements can be integrated. Consider factors such as natural light, space for plants, and areas that could benefit from a touch of greenery.
2. **Consult with experts:** Engage with specialists who can provide tailored solutions based on your specific needs and workspace constraints.
3. **Start small:** Begin with easy-to-maintain plants and gradually expand. Even a few plants can make a significant difference.
4. **Encourage employee participation:** Allowing employees to choose and care for plants can foster a sense of ownership and enhance the overall impact.

The power of plants in reducing burnout and enhancing workplace wellbeing is clear. Through biophilic design, business owners have a valuable ally in creating healthier, more productive work environments. By embracing the principles of biophilic design, you can transform your office into a haven of calm and productivity, ensuring that your employees remain engaged, happy, and far from the brink of burnout. ■

Publication of new Chartered Architectural Technologist Professional Standards Competency Framework

Words by James Banks CMGr FCMI, Head of Membership

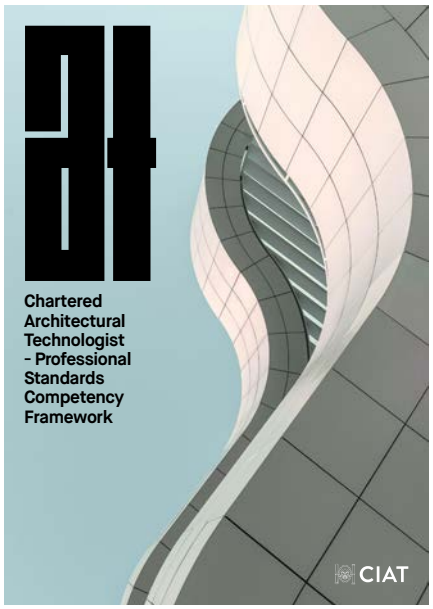
The Professional Standards Competency Framework (PSCF), which outlines the standards and competencies to qualify as a Chartered Architectural Technologist, will be published on 1 May 2025 and will supersede the 2019 Professional Standards Framework (PSF).

These standards and competencies are defined within:

- Stage 1 – Educational Standards,
- Stage 2 – Practice Standards
- Stage 3 – Professional Standards

The framework underwent a periodic review following the revision of the Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statement for Architectural Technology, which was published in 2022. It emphasises fire and health and safety, as well as materials, building performance and regulations. In addition to this, ethics, behaviour, professional conduct and CPD have been amplified in the document.

The title of the PSCF was also modified to indicate that it assesses the **competence** of applicants. These are assessed at a threshold level with the expectation that Chartered Architectural Technologists will continue to learn and advance in their career, thus further improving their capabilities.



The review began in spring 2023 with the support of a Review Group comprising of Honorary Fellows, Fellows, Chartered Members, Associates, Affiliates from varying spheres of the profession, in academia and industry, based in the UK and internationally.

"It is a real testament to the strength of our membership when you see initiatives like this come together," said Usman Yaqub FCIAT, President-Elect of CIAT.

Associates and Affiliates have been notified of the phase out process to qualify under the 2019 PSF through the Professional Assessment qualifying process which ends on 30 April 2025. Anyone wishing to qualify from 1 May 2025 must meet the standards outlined in the PSCF.

"The new framework holds great importance for CIAT, Architectural Technology, and Architectural Technologists," said Paul Laycock MCIAT, Vice-President Education & Chair of Moderators. "This is not just a guideline, but a transformative tool that will ensure the profession evolves to meet future demands around sustainability, technical innovation and ethical considerations. It reaffirms the importance of maintaining high standards, of encouraging personal and professional growth, and of ensuring Architectural Technology remains at the forefront of construction and design in the built environment."

Professor Sam Allwinkle PPBIAT FCIAT, Chair of Education Board, agreed, saying, "The 2025 PSCF is a significant and important reference document for CIAT, Architectural Technology and Architectural Technologists and I am confident that these standards will help challenge, change and drive forward our profession in the next decade."

An external facing PSCF is currently in development, ready to be used to promote the profession and discipline.

If you would like further details on the PSCF or the 2019 PSF phase out, contact membership@ciat.global ■

CIAT60
60th Anniversary 1965-2025

Celebrating a legacy in Architectural Technology

Come and celebrate with CIAT for its 60th anniversary in Dublin! 21-23 November 2025

To mark our 60th year we are hosting a 60th Anniversary Diamond Celebration in Dublin between 21-23 November 2025. It will be a weekend to remember with networking, the AGM and a special celebratory event.

We hope you'll be able to join us as we reflect and look forward on the remarkable journey that both the Institute and discipline has had over the past six decades.

Our Future ATs and Evening Charity Event

On Friday 21 November, we will start with an event for our student membership, affiliates and academic staff, celebrating and encouraging the future faces of Architectural Technology and all that is yet to be achieved in pushing the discipline and the industry forward.

Students and representatives will be from across the five Accredited programmes in Ireland.

Later that day, CIAT will be hosting a charity event in the heart of Dublin city.

CIAT AGM and Anniversary Gala

On Saturday 22 November, CIAT will host its 2025 AGM. We wrap things up in spectacular fashion with the event everyone has been waiting for: CIAT's 60th Anniversary Celebratory Gala.

Here, guests and sponsors will find drinks, a three course meal, dancing to live music, and the opportunity to network, connect, and cheers to the next 60 years, and beyond.

Register your interest today at architecturaltechnology.com/ciat-60th-anniversary-diamond-weekend.html

Bookings open early April

Fáilte Ireland

The benefits of precast, off-site foundation systems in modern construction

Words by Joe Bayley MCIAT, Senior Project Engineer, Roger Bullivant Ltd

In the dynamic world of construction, achieving efficiency, sustainability, and high quality is crucial. The implementation of precast, off-site foundation systems supports these objectives; a notable innovation that offers a host of benefits that traditional methods cannot match. Let's take a look at them.

1. Enhanced quality control
One of the primary advantages of precast, off-site foundation systems is the enhanced quality control they offer. Components are manufactured in a controlled factory environment, which allows for stringent quality checks throughout production. This controlled setting ensures that the foundations meet precise specifications and standards, reducing the likelihood of defects and inconsistencies that can occur with on-site casting.

2. Time efficiency
Time is a critical factor in construction projects, and delays can lead to significant cost overruns. Precast foundations can be produced simultaneously with site preparation activities, significantly reducing the overall project timeline. Once the site is ready, the precast components can be quickly installed, minimising on-site labour and reducing the risk of weather related delays.

3. Cost savings
Overall cost savings of utilising precast foundations can be substantial. The reduction in on-site labour, shorter construction timelines, reduced need for excavation compared to traditional footings and decreased need for rework due to quality issues all contribute to lower overall project costs. Additionally, the predictability of factory production helps in better budgeting and financial planning.

4. Sustainability and environmental benefits
Precast, off-site foundation systems contribute to sustainability in several ways. The controlled manufacturing environment allows for the efficient use of materials which reduces overall waste. The reduced need for on-site construction activities also means less noise, dust, and disruption to the surrounding environment.

5. Improved safety
Construction sites are inherently hazardous, with numerous risks to workers' safety. By shifting a significant portion of the work to a controlled factory environment, the risks associated with on-site construction are greatly reduced. Factory settings are typically safer, with better working conditions and fewer hazards. This shift not only protects workers but also reduces the likelihood of accidents that can cause project delays and additional costs.

6. Design flexibility and reduced excavation
Precast foundations offer a high degree of design flexibility. Modern manufacturing techniques allow for the production of complex shapes and sizes that would be difficult to achieve with traditional on-site casting. This flexibility enables architects and engineers to design innovative structures without being constrained by the limitations of conventional construction methods. Additionally, precast foundations can be customised to meet specific project requirements, including unique architectural features and challenging site conditions.

7. Durability and longevity
The durability of precast concrete is well-documented. These components are designed to withstand harsh environmental conditions and heavy loads, ensuring the longevity of the foundation. Precast foundations are less susceptible to common issues such as shrinkage, cracking, and corrosion, which can compromise the integrity of traditional cast-in-place foundations over time. This resilience translates to lower maintenance costs and a longer service life, providing a more reliable and cost-effective solution for construction projects.

8. Reduced site disruption
Traditional on-site foundation construction can be highly disruptive, with significant noise, dust, and traffic impacts on the surrounding area. Precast foundations, on the other hand, are delivered ready to install, significantly reducing the duration and intensity of on-site activities. This reduction in site disruption is particularly beneficial in urban areas or other sensitive environments where minimising the impact on the local community is crucial.

9. Consistency and predictability
The factory production of precast components ensures a level of consistency and predictability that is difficult to achieve with on-site casting. Each component is produced to exact specifications, ensuring uniformity and reducing the risk of errors. This consistency translates to a more predictable construction process, with fewer surprises and setbacks.

10. Adaptability to various project types
Precast, off-site foundation systems are highly adaptable and can be used in a wide range of construction projects, from residential buildings to large commercial and industrial structures. Their versatility makes them an attractive option for projects with diverse requirements and constraints. These systems can be tailored to meet specific site conditions, such as varying soil types and load-bearing requirements. This adaptability ensures they can be effectively integrated into both new constructions and renovations, providing a flexible solution that meets the unique needs of each project. Furthermore, the ability to produce custom components allows for seamless integration with other building systems, enhancing overall project coherence and performance.

The adoption of precast, off-site foundation systems offers numerous benefits that align with the modern construction industry's goals of efficiency, sustainability, and quality. From enhanced quality control and time efficiency to cost savings and improved safety, these systems provide a robust foundation for successful construction projects. As the industry continues to evolve, the use of precast foundations is likely to become even more prevalent, driving innovation and excellence in construction practices.

By embracing these advanced foundation systems, construction professionals can deliver projects that meet the highest standards of performance and sustainability, ensuring long-term success and satisfaction for all stakeholders involved. ■

Precast foundations are less susceptible to common issues such as shrinkage, cracking, and corrosion,

Resilient façade systems for smog reduction in Shanghai: a technical approach

Words by Ethan Liu MCIAT

Air pollution is a critical issue in many urban areas, with Shanghai one of the most affected. Traditional methods of combating it have not been fully effective, leading to exploring innovative strategies, including using resilient design in building façades. This article delves into the technical aspects of a research project investigating the potential of high-rise commercial building façades to reduce smog in Shanghai using computer simulations and 3D modelling.

Air pollution is a critical issue in many urban areas, with Shanghai one of the most affected. Traditional methods of combating it have not been fully effective, leading to exploring innovative strategies, including using resilient design in building façades. This article delves into the technical aspects of a research project investigating the potential of high-rise commercial building façades to reduce smog in Shanghai using computer simulations and 3D modelling.

Resilient design is an approach that enables buildings to adapt to changing environmental conditions while maintaining functionality. It aims to reduce the risk of damage from environmental factors, such as air pollution. In Shanghai, where air pollution is a significant issue, resilient design principles offer a way to enhance building performance and improve air quality. This research explores the application of resilient design principles in the context of high-rise commercial buildings.

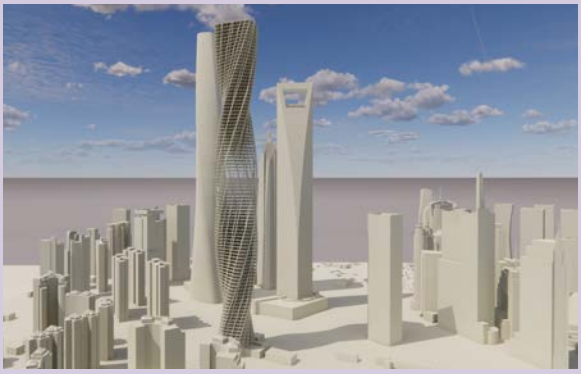
The study employed a quantitative approach, combining computer simulations, 3D modelling, and literature review. The methodology was divided into three phases. Phase 1 was a literature review. Existing case studies and research were studied to understand the current state of resilient design and its application in reducing air pollution. This phase focussed on identifying successful strategies and technologies that could be adapted to Shanghai's urban area.

For the second phase, A 3D model of a high-rise commercial building was developed using Rhino 3D software. This phase involved analysing the urban context of Shanghai, including climate, location, and existing building typologies. The modelling stage allowed for exploring different design options, considering factors such as sunlight exposure, wind flow, and potential overshadowing from surrounding buildings.

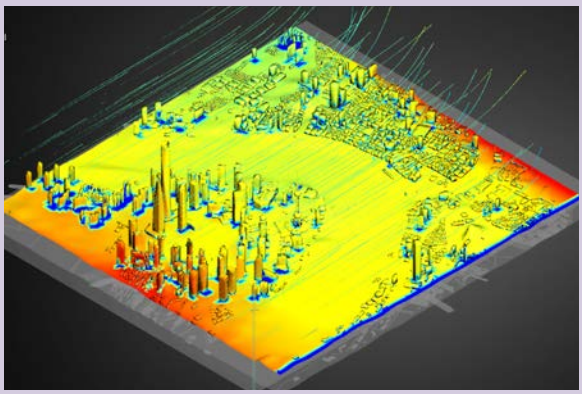
For the final phase – computer simulation and analysis – the 3D model was tested using Autodesk Flow Design and Grasshopper Ladybug simulation software. This involved a detailed analysis of solar radiation, wind patterns, and ventilation, which was then used to refine the building design.

The research utilised several software applications for modelling and simulation:

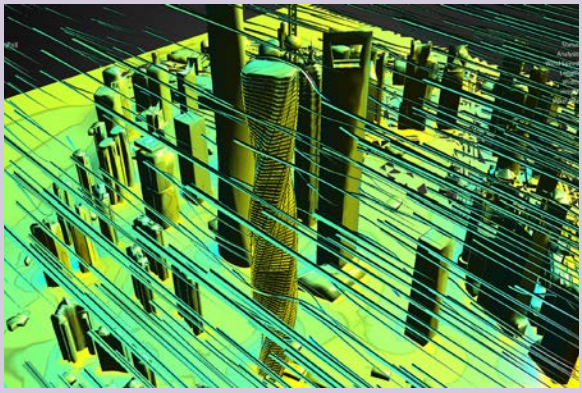
- **Rhinoceros (Rhino 3D):** This software was used to create detailed 3D models of high-rise buildings, allowing for incorporating complex and organic forms. The software's capability to handle free curves was important for exploring non-traditional designs.
- **Grasshopper:** A visual programming language integrated within Rhino to create parametric models and analyse design parameters. It allows for manipulating building design based on data-driven parameters, making it suitable for resilient design.
- **Ladybug:** A Grasshopper plugin that imports and analyses weather data to conduct sun and shadow studies and simulate solar radiation. This tool was vital for optimising the building's orientation and façade design.
- **Autodesk Flow Design:** This program simulates wind patterns around the building model and its surroundings. This helps us understand how building shape can influence airflow and minimise the heat island effect.



The view of the Sky Tower in Pudong District, Shanghai by Rhino 3D



Analysis of wind testing in the on-summer period by Autodesk Flow Design



Detail of the wind simulation in the summer period by Autodesk Flow Design

Overall, the research demonstrated the potential of integrating BIPV, streamlined design, and a shading system to create a more sustainable and resilient building. The simulation results suggest that the proposed design can significantly reduce reliance on fossil fuels and improve air quality. The design also prioritises occupant comfort by using passive cooling.

The limitations of this research include the scope of the project, which focused primarily on the design of the building façade. Factors such as the building's interior design, construction process, and detailed cost analysis were not considered. The study is based on simulation output rather than actual real-world performance measurements.

Future research could focus on:

- **Mobile kit measurements:** Measuring air pollution levels in various locations.
- **Nanoparticle research:** Examining the impact of nanoparticles on human health.
- **Indoor air quality:** Investigating air quality in urban subway systems.

This research study provides a framework for future research and design interventions in the quest for more sustainable and resilient urban environments. By combining advanced simulation tools with resilient design principles, the study showcases the potential for creating buildings that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also environmentally responsible. ■

The study focused on three main design elements, the first being Building-Integrated Photovoltaics (BIPV). The façade incorporates BIPV panels to generate renewable energy. These panels are designed to convert sunlight into electricity, reducing the building's reliance on fossil fuels and helping to combat air pollution. Using dye-sensitized solar glazing provides transparency while preventing solar heat from entering the building.

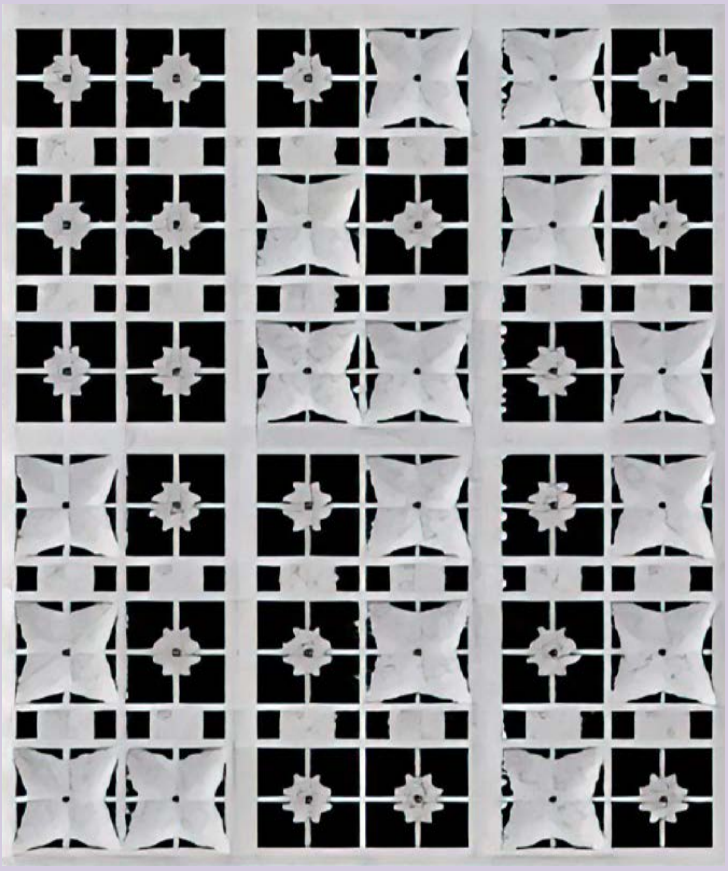
The building shape was also designed to minimise the heat-island effect. The streamlined design was created to reduce heat buildup by enhancing wind flow. This involved digital wind flow analysis to ensure the design would encourage natural ventilation and cooling.

The final design element was a façade shading system, which was incorporated to reduce solar heat gain and maintain occupant comfort. The shading system was designed to provide optimal daylight and natural cooling, minimising the need for air conditioning and reducing energy consumption.

The simulation process included testing the building in various scenarios to validate its performance. Firstly, the research used the Ladybug plugin to measure sunlight exposure on the building's surfaces to optimise BIPV placement and effectiveness. This helped in ensuring that the design maximises energy production through solar radiation.

Secondly, using Autodesk Flow Design, wind tunnel simulations were conducted for both summer and winter. The results indicated that the building's streamlined shape enhanced wind flow and reduced heat buildup. The simulation aimed to optimise passive ventilation and minimise reliance on mechanical cooling.

Finally, simulation of the shading system revealed its effectiveness in controlling solar heat gain. The design provides a comfortable environment while reducing the energy needed for cooling.



Simulation of the external shading system (screens half closed and half open)

Hight street health: converting a building for healthcare uses

Words by Nigel Booen, Director of Design, Boyer (part of Leaders Romans Group).

In November, the controversial Darzi Report in its recommendations for the future of the NHS, stated that, "Too great a share [of NHS funding] is being spent in hospitals, too little in the community," and emphasised the importance of locating healthcare facilities on the high street – closer to where people live, work, and shop.

In the same month, the Built Environment Committee of the House of Lords published 'High Streets: Life beyond retail'. The report recognised that people wish to have a mix of provisions on the high street, which may include public services such as health services. As well as boosting NHS capacity and meeting the needs of local communities, the report says, health centres could act as new "anchor" sites for high streets and bring in more people to the local high street.

The benefits of locating healthcare services in town centres and high streets has been widely recognised for many years. The reasoning was conveyed very comprehensively in a 2020 report by the NHS Confederation, 'Health on the High Street'.

The same year the then government added greater flexibility to the planning system, introducing the new planning use class, Class E, which encompasses commercial, business and service (including healthcare) sectors. As such, Class E enables the repurposing of buildings on high streets and town centres from retail or office use to use as a GP surgery or community health hub without the need for planning consent.

Adapting commercial spaces as healthcare facilities offers several practical benefits: typically, these are large units with high ceilings which enable the installation of the necessary mechanical and electrical systems, such as ventilation, air conditioning, and air quality controls. Reuse over rebuild has numerous sustainability and economic benefits.

The potential for change opens new and timely opportunities, linking to a nationwide rethink of the UK's high streets and the role that health services and communities can play.

It is a win-win situation: from a healthcare point of view, the move to high street premises can help address health inequalities while offering much-needed additional capacity for health service delivery. From a regeneration perspective, encouraging a more diverse group of people to visit and use high streets can be of considerable benefit to existing businesses. Furthermore, placing healthcare services in central areas can reduce carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel to distant hospitals.

When converting a building, there are a number of considerations that must be taken into account from an architectural perspective.

The first is to ensure there is adequate access to natural light, as commercial buildings often have deep floorplans with windows only on the narrow elevations. The existing availability of daylight can be improved by installation of rooflights or new windows. But there is a limit to how much of this can be done under permitted development rights, as any external changes to an existing building are subject to an additional planning application. It is therefore more cost effective to select buildings that have sufficiently sized and orientated windows on most or all elevations.

The quality of the existing building fabric, in terms of thermal and sound performance, must also be considered. Thermal insulation, either by retrofit or upgrading the existing fabric, is almost always required to meet current building regulations. Single pane windows and single skin buildings will usually require more work to meet current performance thresholds, although some older buildings make good conversions if they are of good build quality. Upgrading an existing building's thermal performance can be demanding because older buildings often have crooked walls and are prone to air leakage, so therefore not best suited for high thermal performance.

Sound insulation is also difficult to improve without significant alterations to an existing building. Replacing windows, for instance, will be subject to a further planning application and will likely be required to meet current building regulations and provide a comfortable space for healthcare uses. An alternative can be secondary glazing; however, the cost and user convenience must be considered.

Another consideration is that windows of commercial buildings are likely to be the sole means of ventilation in a conversion. If it is impractical to keep windows open, for instance if the building is public facing with no or little

separation from public realm: there may be little or no ventilation. If this is the case, it may be best to submit an additional planning application to enable increased ventilation, either passively through more windows or through additional mechanical systems.

Landscaping can provide external amenity space, which is not easily found with existing commercial buildings: an opportunity to utilise a commercial building with external spaces would almost certainly be of benefit, albeit the maintenance aspect must be considered in advance.

Privacy is also a key consideration for buildings of healthcare use. Patients and healthcare professionals will not want to feel exposed to either external onlookers or other building users. Commercial buildings often do not make provision for providing levels of privacy required for healthcare use. This should therefore be considered as significant external amendments will likely be required.

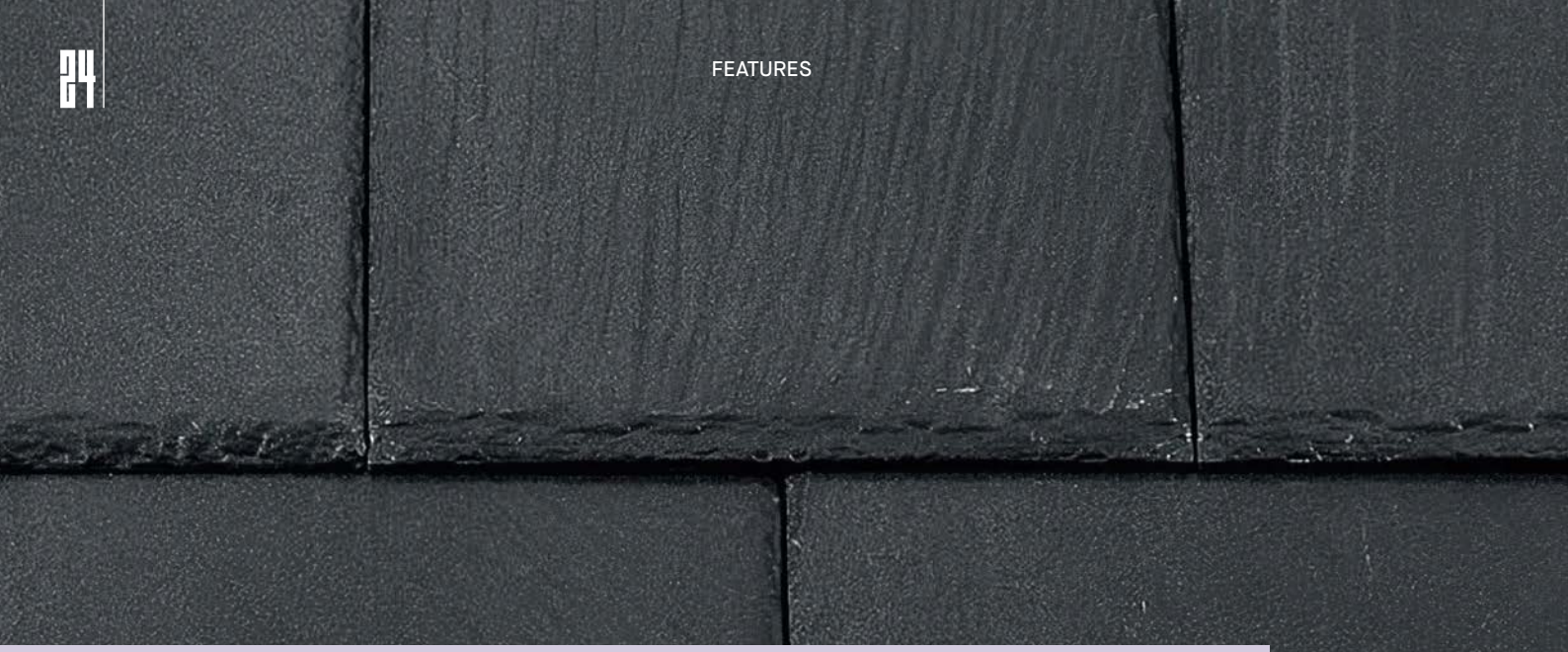
Of course, where existing buildings fall short of potential for conversion under change of use, this can be compensated for by the submission of further planning applications. While change of use is an easier route for a simple conversion, we should not dismiss planning applications on the basis of being needlessly complicated, as a more comprehensive conversion can create a more valuable end product and help achieve greater opportunities for natural light, ventilation, amenity space and security. If there are too many constraints, such as contamination or a poor existing structure, then it may well be better to demolish and rebuild.

Another potential, albeit more short-term, use of high street properties is high street rental auctions, which were introduced in December 2024 as part of the previous government's Levelling-up and Regeneration Act. The initiative exists to give local authorities (in England only) the power to force landlords to let their long-term vacant properties for community use. Essentially a form of compulsory rental (as opposed to compulsory purchase), this will mean that properties that have been vacant for more than 12 months in a 24-month period may be let through auction by local authorities. Importantly for the NHS, the original consultation on this policy proposed that the preferred tenant may not be the one who is willing to pay the most for the spot, but rather the one that brings greater variety to the high street.

Considering that places blighted by long-term vacancy tend to be those where low incomes and high unemployment are rife (Manchester and Luton were cited as examples in the consultation), there are clear benefits – as discussed earlier – in utilising such buildings for healthcare.

Whether through new build development, conversion, or simply the short-term use of a retail unit, the opportunities for healthcare services to relocate to high street settings are considerable and well worth further consideration, both on a national and a local level. ■

The potential for change opens new and timely opportunities, linking to a nationwide rethink of the UK's high streets and the role that health services and communities can play.



Innovation across the decades: the impact of recycled slate tiles

Words by Mat Woodyatt, Product Manager, BMI Redland

Over 40 years, Cambrian has earned its position as the industry's leading engineered slate tile. Let's walk through its history – from top secret development through to its impact on people and planet.

Slate has been used as a building material for centuries and it continues to adorn homes up and down the country. Its unique colour and characteristics provide an aesthetic that can't be achieved with many modern materials. There are many areas across the country that pride themselves on the aesthetic of slate-topped properties, and conservation areas that demand that a slate aesthetic continues to be specified to this day.

However, as a natural product, the industry must be conscious of the use of slate, and we must look to preserve this resource for the future. In fact, many of the slate quarries in Wales are now protected under UNESCO status and most of the slate used in the UK is now imported from countries such as Spain and China, adding further environmental considerations to its use.

So, when Redland first began developing the Cambrian Slate tile in the early-80s, it was well ahead of its time. Fast-forward to today and it's the leading engineered slate tile in the industry and plays a transformative role in new build and renovation projects both here in the UK and around the world.

Innovation is never straightforward, and when it's a world-first that's being developed, processes become a top secret operation. For Redland, that meant setting up a brand-new production facility in Wales – close to where the raw material was being sourced – which remains the heart of production to this day.

Mandy Ellmer, Quality Manager for BMI UK & Ireland, a new recruit at the time, having just left school, was one of the first to join the development team. She recalls: "As the factory was still being built, the product was being developed behind a big green tarpaulin – and you had to be granted access to see behind the curtain. There was one time when I had to drive through the night to collect a catalyst, before being met by the team in the misty factory car park in the Brecon Beacons – it really did feel like a covert mission!"

The Cambrian Slate represented a truly innovative approach to innovation. By taking some of the large quantity of waste slate that is generated in the slate quarrying process and turning it into an attractive, durable slate tile, the development was a world-first. In practice, the Cambrian Slate tile made it possible to balance traditional slate aesthetics with engineered performance and environmental consciousness.

Within a decade of its development, Cambrian Slate was recognised for its innovation and received the Queen's Award for Technological Achievement in 1991.

Mandy added: "When Cambrian won the Queen's Award, it felt like a reward for all the hard work the team had put in – and going to Buckingham Palace to meet the Queen was an amazing experience!"

From its purpose-built production facility in Wales, Cambrian Slate has quietly transformed how the roofing

industry thinks about, and uses, the material.

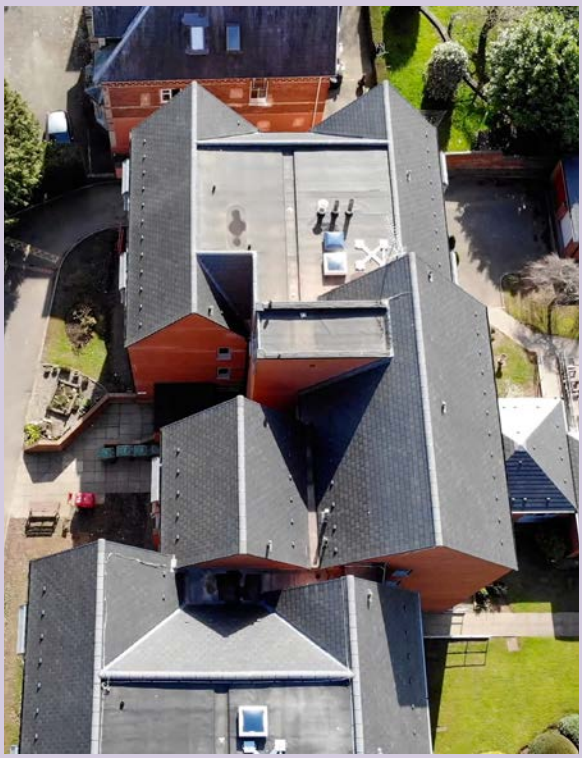
Aesthetics are, of course, key where the Cambrian Slate is concerned. The tile is manufactured using moulds taken from local slates to create the classic slate appearance of a riven surface and thin leading edge. And with the high natural slate content, it means the Cambrian tile can deliver a genuine Welsh slate look. In fact, many projects on Listed Buildings and in natural slate Conservation Areas have been approved for use with Cambrian over the years.

As an engineered tile, Cambrian can also offer some advantages that natural slate can't. It is designed to be easy to install – something which is aided by its uniformity and lightweight characteristics. Consistent size and quality allow roofers to install Cambrian quickly and easily with no grading required, while interlocking edges allow the slate to be laid in the same way as an interlocking tile, speeding up installation and reducing the slates required per square metre. Alongside this, precast holes, nibs for easy hanging, and a unique three-point fixing system help to save time on site.

Aside from the on-site practicalities, Cambrian Slate can support architects and specifiers to maximise some of the environmental credentials of projects. Using 60% recycled Welsh slate, the finished product benefits from a significant carbon saving when set against alternatives that are imported from overseas.

The benefits of Cambrian have also been felt far beyond the UK in its 40-year history, with the innovative tile being the material of choice for buildings impacted by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit New Zealand in 2014. With insurance companies leading the charge for lighter roofing materials to replace the concrete tiles commonly used in the area, Cambrian was used on many buildings to create a traditional aesthetic and deliver lightweight roofs. It is believed that lighter roofs would reduce the levels of damage should another quake hit the area in the future.

Mandy added: "To be able to look back on 40 years of Cambrian Slate, and four decades of development that have defined my career, it is fantastic to see what has been achieved. Taking a waste product and creating something truly innovative, seeing how it has transformed buildings around the world, and knowing that it has stood the test of time really does speak volumes."



While the development of Cambrian Slate in the early-1980s signalled a new approach to sustainable slate roofs, further innovation from BMI Redland has supported its adoption on rooftops around the world.

While natural slate boasts a timeless beauty which will always be in demand, the complexities of modern construction require solutions which prioritise sustainability while redefining expectations around performance, aesthetics and functionality. Cambrian fulfils this by combining the natural beauty of Welsh slate with the strength, versatility and functionality of an engineered solution. ■

The benefits of Cambrian have also been felt far beyond the UK in its 40-year history, with the innovative tile being the material of choice for buildings impacted by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit New Zealand in 2014.

The benefits of specifiers engaging with insulation manufacturers

Words by Rob Firman, Technical and Specification Manager, Polyfoam XPS

Our technical services department has been contacted, on multiple projects, about there being insufficient depth in the floor build-up to accommodate the insulation for the required ground floor U-value. Sometimes the thickness of extruded polystyrene (XPS) needed was around double the depth of the insulation zone allowed for.

This particular issue with ground floor constructions has been a common feature of technical enquiries lately. At face value it might seem like a relatively minor problem that should have a simple resolution – but what if it shouldn't be dismissed so easily? And what if what it says about the ways in which specifiers and insulation manufacturers could help deliver better-performing buildings is, in fact, illuminating?.

This is not a problem unique to XPS. The qualities that make XPS a good all-round insulation solution mean it is not the best-performing in terms of thermal efficiency. But, in the majority of cases, no commonly available insulation material is capable of performing well enough. People want insulation to achieve the impossible.

Getting U-value calculations right and having accurate material data in them is fundamental to good construction practice. It shows that all parties involved – from specifier, to Building Control Body, to contractor – understand the build-ups being specified and installed, and the importance of the outcomes being aimed for.

Though most U-value calculations carried out are accurate and fit for purpose, when we do see inaccuracies, they tend to be glaring and concerning. Hoping to achieve the desired U-value with very limited space risks the specification of an insulant on thermal efficiency alone – without assessing whether its other qualities are suitable to meet the performance requirements for the intended application.

We have in the past received technical enquiries

where PIR insulation was specified, only to realise the additional loadbearing capability offered by XPS was needed. Because of the slight difference in thermal performance, the consequence is they don't have a deep enough insulation zone.

The project then faces the possibility of a compromise: meet the required U-value but risk having insufficient loadbearing capability; or have the right compressive strength but risk non-compliance in terms of energy efficiency.

If we see inaccuracies in a U-value calculation or specification, it is often at a very late stage. Because specifications have been set – and, in the case of floors, the ground possibly even dug out already – our advice means an inconvenient change to the project.

When we flag something, we are more likely to be seen as the 'difficult' party. We then must go the extra mile to explain the reason for our concern. That approach is backwards, and our industry needs to do better at pursuing accuracy and questioning whether something is too good to be true.

Whatever the building size, the principle is the same: speak to us early in the project timeline if you can. Nobody knows an insulation product better than the manufacturer themselves. Preparing information about U-value targets, performance requirements and outline specifications helps to reduce the likelihood of shocks or inconvenience later.

Correct specification and calculations are one thing, but thermal insulation only performs as well as it is installed. The best specified floor, wall or roof means nothing if what happens on site does not correlate with what was designed.

Nobody reading this will be a stranger to errors in installation that are either picked up too late or have been covered up and made unavailable for inspection, left unaddressed.

Closing the performance gap (that is, getting buildings to perform in-use as they are predicted to perform on paper) requires time and attention to detail. This can be in short supply on construction projects. That is not to be negative about our industry; it is a reflection of enquiries that come across our technical helpdesk every week.

Construction product manufacturers, including those producing insulation, are keen to make their solutions easy to work with. So why do issues occur?

Insulation is only likely to form part of a warrantied system (and be subject to on-site checks and extra manufacturer support) on larger projects. The rest of the time the manufacturer basically loses control over how their product is used once it leaves the factory gate.

Installation instructions are, by necessity, generic and cannot cover every possible scenario. In addition, installing products on site means working in 3D, and 2D details can't always show what is needed. All manufacturers offer technical support, but that resource or advice won't be accessed if an installer doesn't want to seek it out. If they don't know (or, worse, don't care) that they might be doing something wrong, then they simply won't ask.

How feasible is it to foresee what an installer *might do*? And how reasonable is it to *try* to foresee those things? Imagining and then planning for every way that an installer could get things wrong is time consuming and ultimately impractical.

It is good practice to consider buildability when specifying and detailing. Simpler build-ups go a long way to making for simpler installation, especially when making a design on paper reality on site. To aid that approach, specifiers can again engage with manufacturers to guide decision-making that guards against some 'what if' scenarios.

Consider a common example with ground floor constructions. Foil-faced insulation products, like PIR boards, must be laid above the damp proof membrane (DPM) and below the air and vapour control layer (AVCL). If they are allowed to come into contact with the ground, moisture or curing concrete or screed then the foil face can become damaged and reduce the performance of the insulation.

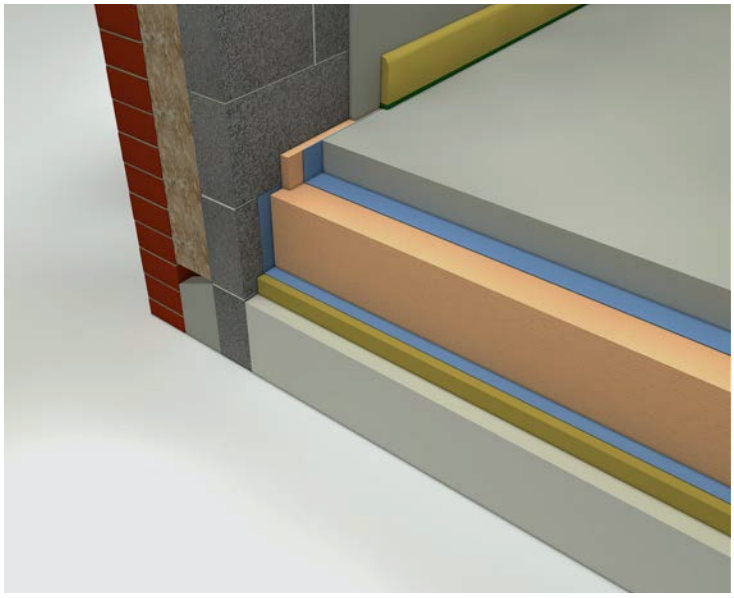
There are two main issues here. The first is that our technical team has encountered many projects where they have been asked whether it is okay that a PIR board was installed in the wrong position. The second is that, even if a problem is identified, there is a lack of appetite to take up the floor to ensure it is re-laid correctly. Both these issues assume the problem is identified in the first place.

Extruded polystyrene can be installed in the same way: above the DPM and *below* the AVCL. But thanks to its low moisture absorption, it can also be installed below the DPM without any fear of losing performance. The DPM can therefore act as the AVCL as well, thus saving money on a second membrane layer while also guarding against potentially incorrect installation.

This kind of value is what manufacturers can bring to the specification process, with a view to supporting installers once a project reaches site. It shows that the thinnest insulation does not necessarily represent the best overall value. It can be worth exploring alternative solutions and seeking manufacturer advice on the possible installation benefits.

Compared to simply having the lowest lambda value, another material might create savings in material and labour, helping to ensure the building delivers its intended performance once constructed. ■

Whatever the building size, the principle is the same: speak to us early in the project timeline if you can. Nobody knows an insulation product better than the manufacturer themselves.



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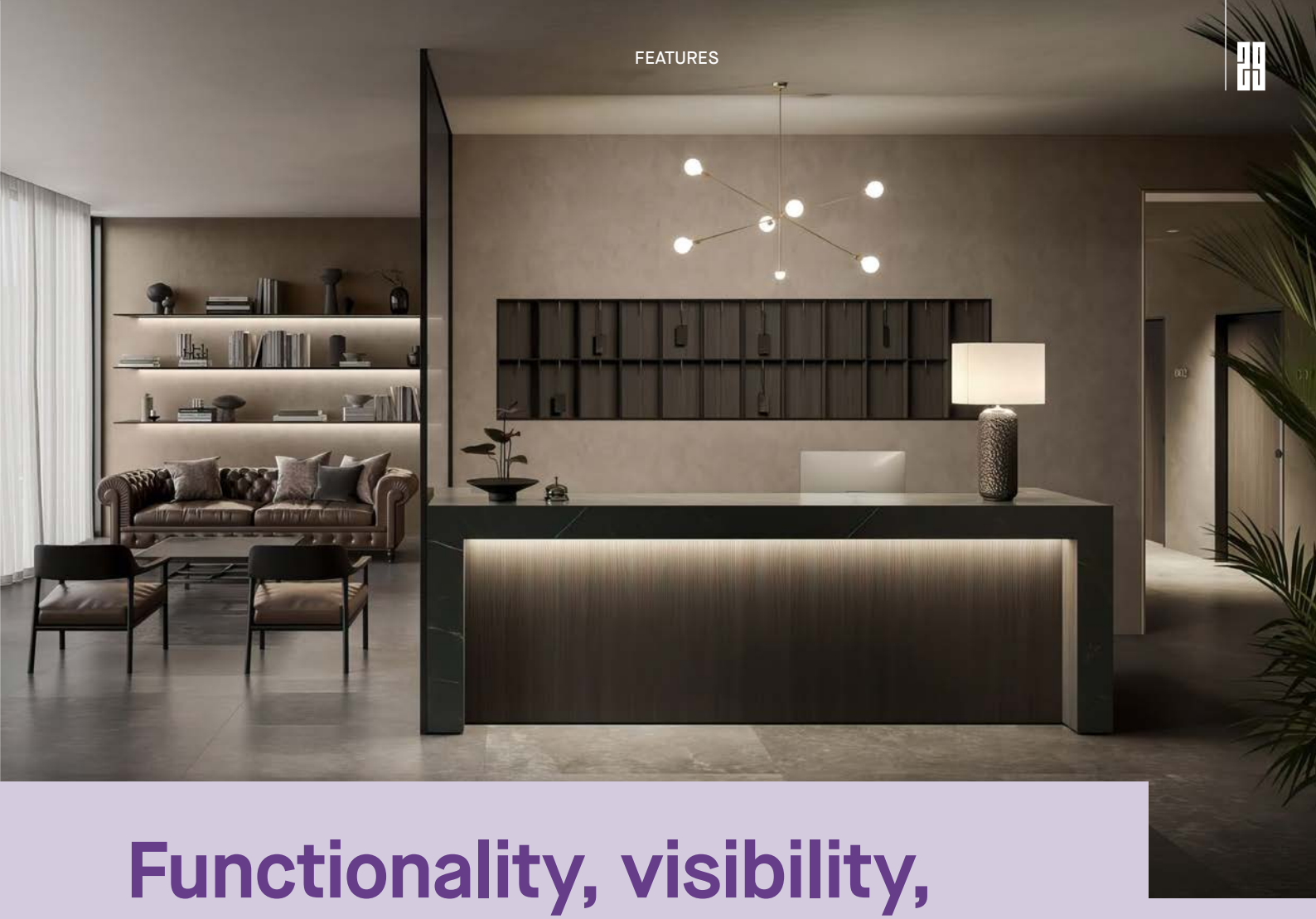

Functionality, visibility, sustainability: the simpler approach to specification

Words by George Emms, Sales Leader UK & Ireland – Specification, Polyrey (part of Wilsonart UK)

With a greater number of materials, décors and finishes available to specifiers than ever before, the ease at which the right match can be found for one's commercial projects has become increasingly important. Certain obstacles can impede this process, though, including the lack of ease of sourcing décors with the desired finishes, a lack of readily available technical information, and difficulties understanding what product finishes are available. Let's look at how these issues can be resolved.

The move from office-based working to working from home or hybrid models has upended business practices across all industries, including architectural and interior design specification. Its long-term impact on professional development continues to unfold in unexpected ways, including knowledge pooling. Where once designers would sit in the same office and use each other's expertise to fill potential knowledge gaps, working from home has reduced access to this invaluable communal resource.

Though this is nobody's fault, the impact of this on a project is clear, especially for more junior employees taking their first, formative steps in the sector. In areas requiring specialist knowledge such as surface specification, the inability to easily consult more experienced colleagues may lead to the specification of lower quality or poorly suited materials.

This knowledge vacuum is further compounded by the continuing phaseout of the librarian role within architecture practices. Previously, this role was

invaluable to designers looking for specific material samples or product information. As the price of property continues to rise, many practices simply do not have the floorspace to maintain a library, and by extension, employ a librarian to maintain it.

This is not a situation architecture practices can fully control, but the impact remains the same: a loss of key support mechanisms during the surface specification process. Surfaces can already present concerns for designers, with an often-overwhelming level of options available. Multiple factors must be considered depending on the application, including durability, ease-of-maintenance and what specific product properties are required.

But having to hand a readily available reference guide that clearly provides key technical data and product information to the reader will help support the specifier in making an informed decision. In an industry where knowledge gaps can have a major impact in securing alternative materials; for example, if a fabricator informs a designer mid-project that a specified surface is not available in a certain decor, looking to the manufacturer for assistance could save time and money.

This expertise is instrumental to streamlining the surface selection process. While maintaining awareness of product data may be more challenging given today's agile working culture, leveraging supply chain support can allow greater clarity and simplicity.

Designers should include their appointed surface provider into the project's documents as standard so they can assist with any technical or availability questions the fabricator or installer may have. This approach allows the specifier to remain focused on the project at hand. Engaging a supplier that can offer RIBA-accredited CPDs on this topic is critical to ensuring both continued compliance and an easier decision-making process when selecting surfaces.

The need for peace of mind over product information is further underlined by the growing focus on sustainable products in building design. Indeed, sustainability has moved from a preference to a priority over the past decade. Though this is clearly welcome, the relative newness and fast-changing nature of environmental regulations may present difficulties around remaining compliant during surface specification. Greenwashing also remains a topic of concern, with unproveable product claims further muddying the waters over which products are actually made using sustainable methods, technologies and materials.

In these circumstances, it is again vital that designers look to their supply chain to educate and simplify what is required in each specific product category. Sustainability-related data should be easily available for all surfaces. This includes product passports that list full and clear material composition (such as the three pillars – comfort and health, natural resources, and circularity), plus its total carbon footprint cost from manufacture to transport.

In conclusion, changing working practices risk the creation of potential knowledge vacuums for design firms. To address this on a project-by-project basis, company stakeholders should look to their suppliers as – instead of a manufacturer of surfaces and panels – a trusted advisor, any awareness gaps will be filled and selection processes simplified. ■

While maintaining awareness of product data may be more challenging given today's agile working culture, leveraging supply chain support can allow greater clarity and simplicity

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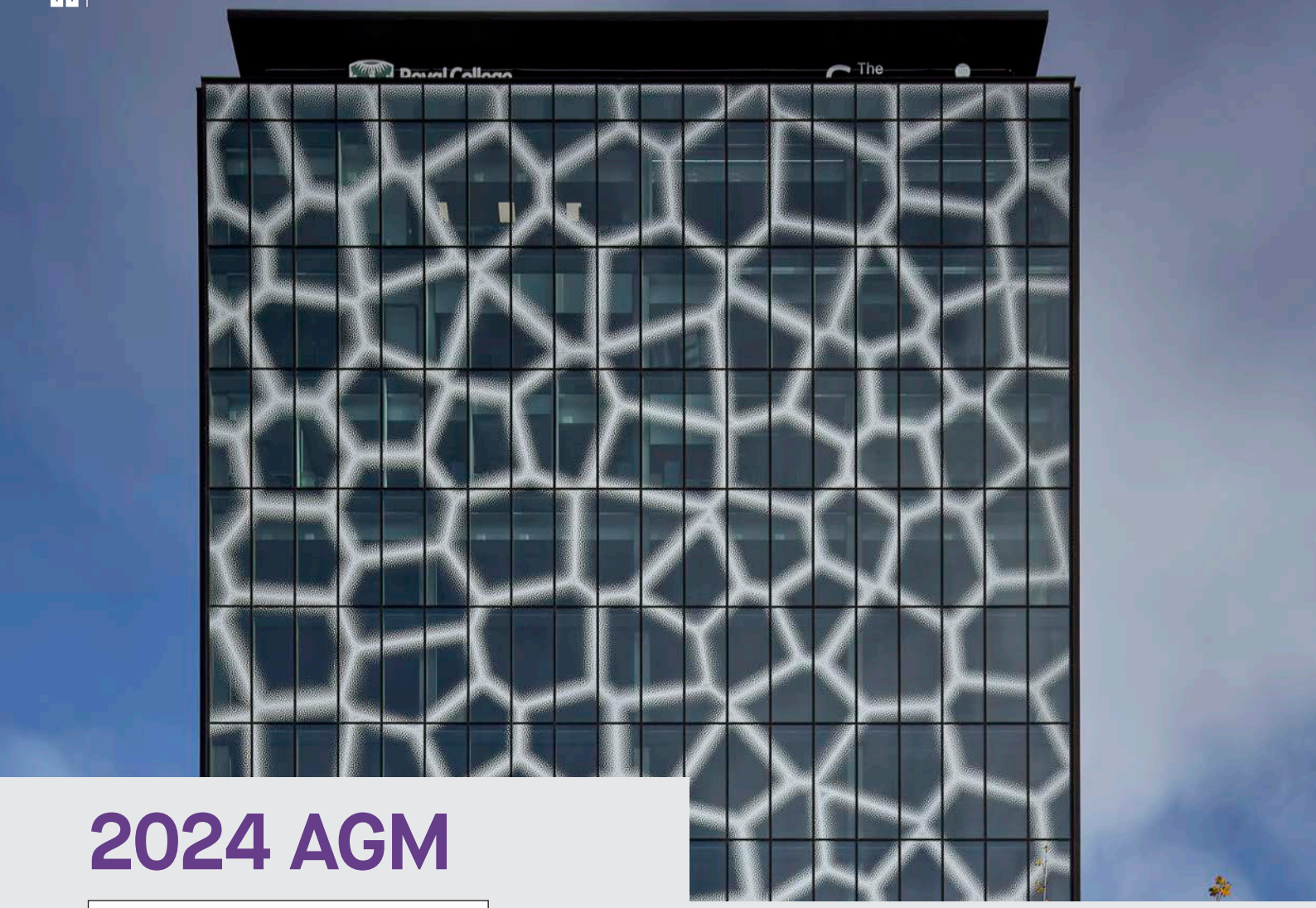

2024 AGM

Words by Adam Endacott, Head of Creative & Communications

The AGM took place in Liverpool on 16 November 2024 as a hybrid event with delegates attending in person and via Zoom.

The Institute's 19th Annual General Meeting was held at The Spine, located in Paddington Village, in the heart of Liverpool's Knowledge Quarter, the building is the northern home of the Royal College of Physicians. Also known as the 'giraffe building', The Spine owes its name to the striking staircase on its north elevation, which resembles the human vertebrae and connects fourteen floors of offices, public areas and spaces for events and conferences. The curious and distinctive pattern on the building's façade has been created using the mathematical Voronoi pattern. It comprises 23 million individual polygons, making each glass wall panel different and unique. Voronoi patterns are extremely common in nature and can be found in leaves, cells and animal fur. In the case of The Spine, the polygons take inspiration from the human skin cells. A full feature on the building can be found in issue 149.

The meeting saw the approval of the accounts as well as the authorisation to Council to appoint the auditors. The one Resolution was to amend Byelaw 25 to read 'Amendments or alterations to the Regulations made under the Byelaws 23 and 24 shall require approval by the Executive Board' – this was approved (44 for and 1 against). These were all voted on by the Voting Delegates, made up of representatives from the Regions and Centres.

At the close of the AGM, Eddie Weir PCIAT thanked Kevin Crawford PPCIAT MCIAT, who had dedicated the last four years as President Elect, President and Immediate Past President. To show the Institute's appreciation for everything that he had done for CIAT, a gift of thanks was presented for use in his man cave.

The outgoing Honorary Treasurer, Doug Fewkes, was also thanked as he stepped down and said he had led the Finance Committee admirably and ensured important decisions were made and left the finances in a sound position ready for the next Honorary Treasurer, Stacey Taylor MCIAT. His work on the refurbishment was to be commended and the Executive Board would miss his wise words and jokes!

The remainder of the day saw presentations on BS40102 Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) by Michael Jaggs, Associate Director, BRE Academy, Design and Construction of the Spine by Rob Hopkins, Regional Director at AHR Architects, an update on aspiration by Joe Hyett MCIAT culminating in an update on the Professional Standards Framework Update from the Head of Education, Dr Noora Kokkarinen and Head of Membership, James Banks. ■


Doug Fewkes
Tara Page
Eddie Weir


CIAT

An interview with Chris Halligan MCIAT, Chair of the Climate Society

Words by Tim Fraser, Deputy Editor

Last year, CIAT launched the Climate Society, an intra-Institute network addressing the environmental aspects of Architectural Technology. It serves as a collaborative platform where professionals can share experiences and insights to avoid past pitfalls and embrace innovative, environmentally friendly approaches. Key areas of focus include carbon management, retrofitting practices and specifying sustainable alternatives on projects. I sat down with Chris Halligan MCIAT, Chair, to discuss the exciting future of the society and how you can get involved.

Chris Halligan, who describes himself as a "born meddler", is passionate about what he sees as Architectural Technology's essential role in tackling the climate emergency. And he has been for a while now, having been involved in sustainable design "for well over three decades", he tells me in his dulcet Leeds accent. A lot of societies he has had experience with in the past were unfortunately all talk, and he is keen that this new society does "something meaningful" to promote and lift up the technologists' unique skillset in tackling the crisis.

So what are some of the hurdles that have to be overcome if ATs are to be at the forefront of the industry's response to the climate emergency? It all lies, he tells me, in policy and practice. "A lot of what's termed net zero and sustainable design is concerned with operational energy rather than embodied energy", he says, which is "a mistake". As energy production becomes increasingly efficient, the proportion of a building's carbon footprint – which lies in the embodied side of it – continues to increase.

"To me, a sustainable design is something which has the lowest impact possible on the planet," he tells me. Through "understanding how buildings perform, how they work; the technical operation of the actual fabric of the building" technologists can "make a meaningful contribution to lowering the embodied carbon footprint of a building." At the very earliest stages of design, "the function and performance of a building fabric needs to be taken into account as the basis for sustainable design".

This is not true of the current legislation and guidance, which, he says, "is kind of missing the point. It's addressing the symptoms and not the causes." An example of this? "All too often I still see people trying to address sustainable demands by using bits of bolt-on plant!" he exclaims.

The task ahead of him is a large one, as it has to do with repositioning our industry and our society. "We've decided to come up with quite nice buildings which are then heated and cooled by sticking bits of machinery on them," Chris explains. "That's abdicated responsibility for the actual building and the climate within it. The fact is that the fabric of a building, the shape of a building, the orientation of a building, the mass of a building are all climate modifiers, and they're going to govern what kind of climate you have inside that building, and how much energy you need to make it liveable. If we're clever enough, you shouldn't need hardly anything, and we know that can be done.

"This, to me, is the role of the technologist."

With ATs' skillsets being uniquely suited to tackle the climate crisis, they should be in incredible demand at the moment, but many people still don't know much or anything about the profession. This is where promotion comes in. "For a long time, the technologist was almost a second class citizen," he says. "We were thought of as being like kind of the architects' sidekicks." In his extensive career, he has had the pleasure of working with "some very knowledgeable architects, some very good architects", but he's also "worked with some architects who aren't..." Why is that? "I do think that architectural education is lacking," he says. "I think it concentrates far too much on auteurism – it's aimed at creating the next superstar.

"In some respects, there's nothing wrong with that. I love high-brow architecture," he says, "but an essential part of building design is the way a building functions, the way it lives and breathes." This is especially true when it comes to the way construction affects the environment.

"The term technologist relates to the technical function of buildings, and we should be grabbing that by both hands and shouting from the rooftops that we can make a difference," he says, and I can hear the passion in his voice. "I think we don't, and I'd like to change that, to tell you the truth, because I think we've got more to offer than a lot of people involved in the construction industry."

This is what the Climate Society is aiming to achieve. They are currently "moving towards having a set of meaningful tasks" that Chris can "assign to people to actually achieve and give CIAT something to promote and say to the industry, 'Look, here we are, we've got this knowledge.'" That means the more people who get involved right now, the better.

But why should you, reader, get involved? Because "it's our Institute", Chris says. "If you're interested in making the role of the technologist more important, more meaningful, and more respected, it's up to us to do that.

"A lot of the time we join clubs and societies, and we expect things to be done for us, yet every society is only the sum of its parts. CIAT isn't just a few people telling everybody else what to do, it's an Institute for technologists, and if you want something to change, and if you want something to happen, the only thing to do is to get off your backside and get involved."

With ATs' skillsets being uniquely suited to tackle the climate crisis, they should be in incredible demand at the moment, but many people still don't know much or anything about the profession.

Membership to the Climate Society is open to all CIAT members and affiliates. It also welcomes professionals from other institutes participating in similar networks. The Society is chaired by Chris and supported by a team including Vice-President Technical, Vice-President Practice, Vice-President Education, and CIAT staff lead, Steve Fox.

In terms of plans for the future, Chris sums up, "I want the Climate Society to be a vehicle for the promotion of the technologist's skills, but I also want us to be able to make a meaningful contribution to the climate emergency." In the past, it's often felt like it's one or the other, he says, but this time the two go hand in hand, so we need to make the most of that.

"If we want things to change," Chris concludes, "we've got to change it."

To register your interest in the Climate Society, email Steve Fox, CIAT's Practice & Technical Officer, at s.fox@ciat.global ■

AT Awards 2025

The Architectural Technology Awards (AT Awards) 2025 recognise the people and projects that demonstrate excellence in Architectural Technology.

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- To receive unprecedented exposure from CIAT online and in print.

Judging

Each category has its own independent Panel of Judges, made up of Chartered Architectural Technologists, who review entries to determine the Finalists and select the winners for their category. The judging process is designed to provide a fair and transparent process that is overseen by the Verification Panel.

Categories

Small Project of the Year
This Award recognises and celebrates schemes that most effectively demonstrate technical excellence realised at a more modest cost. This category may cover anything from small houses and extensions through to retail and unique projects.

New Build of the Year
This Award recognises and celebrates new build projects or schemes that most effectively demonstrate technical excellence.

Retrofit of the Year
This Award recognises and celebrates the value of exceptional retrofitting across all sectors and where those involved have given new or improved life to a building or infrastructure, demonstrating technical excellence.

Conversion of the Year
This Award recognises and celebrates a conversion project whether to a building or structure and has demonstrated technical excellence.

Project of the Year
This Award is given to any winner across the four categories that is an outstanding example of Architectural Technology, at the discretion of the Judging Panel.

The AT Innovation Award
This Award recognises and celebrates vocational research, innovation and delivery in the context of Architectural Technology.

Student Project of the Year
This Award recognises and celebrates a project completed by a student who has demonstrated technical excellence.

Student Report of the Year
This Award recognises and celebrates a report completed by a student in the context of Architectural Technology.

Gold Award
This Award recognises and celebrates an individual who has gone above and beyond with their contribution and commitment to the Institute.

The aspiration Award for Emerging Talent in AT
This Award recognises and celebrates an individual who is a new and exceptional talent in Architectural Technology. It awards individuals who have demonstrated the highest level of excellence at the very start of their career in AT.

Chartered Architectural Technologist of the Year
This Award recognises and celebrates an individual who has demonstrated outstanding success and is the very best example of excellence and professionalism in Architectural Technology.

President's Medal
This Award recognises and celebrates an extraordinary distinction or exceptional contribution to Architectural Technology and the profession. It is awarded once in any one Presidential term.

Policy and External Affairs update
Spring 2025

Words by Jack Fleming, Policy & Public Affairs Executive

Welcome to the first regular update from CIAT's Policy & External Affairs Team. Our aim is to keep you up to date on key developments affecting the Architectural Technology profession as well as your Institute's engagement with political and policymakers.

NPPF reform

The second half of 2024 was a busy time in the policy and political sphere, with a new Labour administration keen to demonstrate progress to voters. In December, following a major consultation exercise, Government launched a revised National Planning Policy Framework that aims to boost housebuilding through new binding targets, more stringent land supply and local plan requirements, and increased flexibility to develop low quality green belt land. In addition, further reforms to planning are currently being explored, with a new Planning and Infrastructure Bill expected in 2025. CIAT broadly supports planning reforms to increase housing supply, while seeking to ensure that reforms to boost quantity do not undermine quality in new housing, but are delivered to a robust standard and with adequate infrastructure, to ensure local buy-in.

Grenfell inquiry phase 2 report

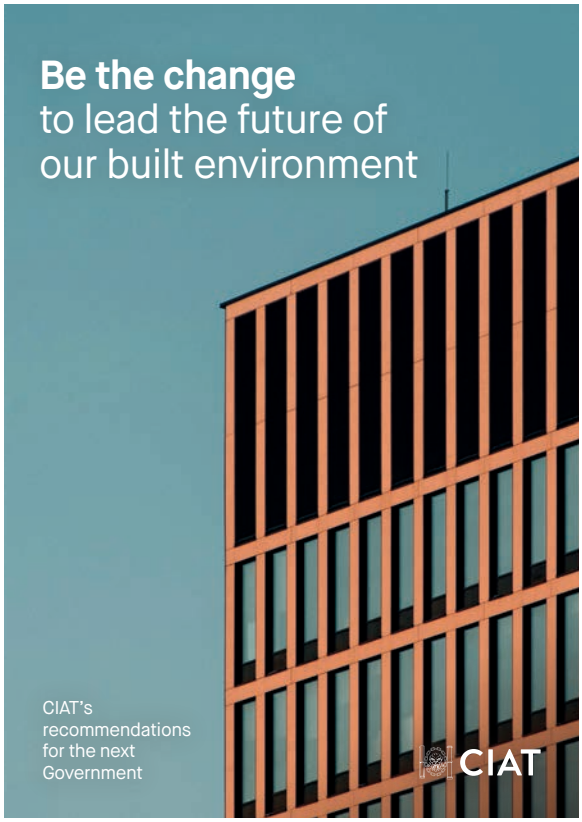
Another major milestone has been the publication of the Phase 2 Report of the Grenfell Tower Fire Inquiry. The Report identified serious failings in many areas of the built environment. CIAT and the wider sector continues to work with Government to address identified issues and enhance building safety, including remediating unsafe buildings and embedding the Principal Designer and Principal Contractor (BSA) roles. The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government has convened various Task-and-Finish sub-groups to inform the Government response to the Report, with CIAT representation on both the industry competence sub-group and system transformation sub-group. Information on CIAT's Principal Designer Register, as well as further guidance and FAQs can be found on the Institute's website, https://architecturaltechnology.com/resources/building-safety-hub.html.

Approved documents review
In December, UK Government announced a wholesale review of the Approved Documents (which provide technical guidance on Building Regulations), to take place in 2025. The aim of the review is to ensure that the form of documents is accessible, clear and user-friendly (particularly for SMEs). This will be a major undertaking, which Chartered Architectural Technologists will be well placed to inform. The Department has begun conversations with the Building Safety Regulator to inform this work and will keep the membership informed as this progresses.

Political engagement
In late 2024, CIAT launched a programme of political engagement, writing to key Government ministers and Opposition spokespeople, as well as backbench MPs and Lords. Through this work, CIAT is promoting the role and value of Architectural Technology as a discipline which can deliver a future-proofed, sustainable and high-quality built environment, and is advocating for key policy priorities, including quality and sustainability in housing policy, investment in skills, and fair procurement frameworks.

The Team regularly monitors ongoing parliamentary and Government activity, responding to consultations and providing briefings for key debates. To get in touch with the team, email externalaffairs@ciat.global.

Partnerships and Collaboration
The Team is in the process of proactively refreshing our existing arrangements with UK and Global like-minded organisations whilst seeking out potential new collaborations within the built environment sector. Internationally, there are strong opportunities to grow membership while increasing the influence of Architectural Technology in regions where recognition has progressed more slowly.



Whilst there are already established collaborative groups in existence within the construction sector it is important to note that these tend to be dominated by the tier one contractors as well as by the largest and oldest professional bodies. For that reason and considering the size of many Architectural Technologist-led practices, we are exploring the potential of new collaboration networks bringing together smaller, more niche organisations, including both professional bodies and trade associations (which are sometimes neglected). This offers the potential to grow the Institute's Affiliate Group Body Corporate (AGBC) scheme.

One vitally important task, for both CIAT as an organisation and for all of you as representatives of the Institute and the profession, is to tell the world at large about the value of Architectural Technology, and the role the profession can play in solving so many of the challenges facing the built environment today.

Whether talking to an MP, a potential client or even a family member, we have all had to spend time explaining what an Architectural Technologist does. As your professional body, CIAT will continue to promote the profession in everything we do, but as members, you are our greatest asset. By unashamedly promoting your skills, and that of your wider profession, to your clients, networks and friends, you can help us boost awareness and recognition of Architectural Technology, making it easier for us to advocate for your interests. One small change you can make is to ensure that you use your professional title and postnominals on any professional communications.

If you would like to help us to promote the profession more broadly, for example by contacting your local MP about the challenges facing the profession, please do email externalaffairs@ciat.global. ■

CPD... and how you can do it!

Words by Dr Noora Kokkarinen, Head of Education

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) conjures up images of having to attend a paid for course or seminar and being talked at. Not only is this a drain on time and resources, but how sustainable is it to find the right events, book your space and re-arrange your schedule accordingly several times throughout the year to meet the Institute's annual requirement[1] of a minimum of 35 hours?

This out-dated assumption of what CPD is makes you an unenthusiastic actor in your own professional development. Would you be as reluctant to act if the possibility of a promotion was there? The answer to that is probably no.

CPD is not intended to be an add-on to an already busy workload; it is meant to develop your skills and help you perform better in your current role or enable you get to the next level of your career. In effect, if you learn something new, it is developing you professionally.

Paid for courses/seminars are just a few of the ways in which you can develop yourself professionally, and in most cases you can direct your own learning and development to suit your ambitions. Best of all, the majority of these activities do not require much, if any, financial investment on your part.

Activities that can count towards your annual CPD requirements include:

- **Research**
  If you are having to look into specific materials or techniques for project(s) that you or your practice is working on, this counts as CPD.

  The key is to keep track and log the time you spent researching. This can be done on your own CPD record that can be accessed within the 'My CIAT' member login area of the website.

  Reading up on existing and upcoming regulations also counts as CPD, as this will help you and your colleagues ensure any projects are compliant with the latest requirements, rather than having to make revisions at a later stage.

- **Online resources**
  All members and affiliates have access to CIAT's Technology Network, which is a directory of members and affiliates willing to give guidance to other members and affiliates. Its main aim is to put

members and affiliates, with experience in different areas, in touch with each other for guidance and support. Some members or affiliates who work in isolation benefit from contact with others in their field, as do newly qualified members experiencing teething problems. If you are not the one seeking advice, why not register the areas/topics that you would be willing to advise others on instead? Mentoring is also a form of CPD.

The Building Safety Act 2022 is at the forefront for those that work on projects in England and Wales, and therefore you may find the information listed on the Building Safety Hub relevant on our website.

CIAT's *AT Weekly* enewsletter is another online resource that can keep you up-to-date with relevant information relating to the built environment, as well as the Institute's activity nationally and internationally.

The AT CPD Register lists a range of learning opportunities that have been assessed by CIAT and deemed professionally beneficial to Architectural Technology professionals. Similarly, our CPD Catalogue can also help you, whether this is watching the Wessex Region's CPD in 43 or looking up relevant information when researching products or methods for your projects. Though please note that this content has not been assessed by the Institute.

- **Professional qualifications**

There are several benefits to progressing your membership; Chartered status in particular, is a mark of an individual's commitment to upholding professional standards. Some professional qualifications can also denote a specialism within a particular area.

Chartered Architectural Technologist, MCIAT [2]

Becoming a Chartered Architectural Technologist does not happen overnight, but you can build steps into your professional development plan to help you obtain this status.

If you do not have much practical experience, you could refer to CIAT's Professional Standards Framework and speak to your employer about gaining experience in the areas in which you need to develop, mapped to our standards. Keep a record of this experience as this will save you a lot of time when you are in a position to complete the application process to become a Chartered Member.

For those of you that are closer to submitting, do not forget that attending the Membership Progression sessions or the MCIAT Short Course offered by the Membership Department also count as CPD, as you will be given advice as to how best structure your application form and portfolio. If necessary, you can use the Mentor Match Me service to be mentored by a Chartered Architectural Technologist prior to submitting your application form, or before sitting your interview.

Fellow Membership

Chartered Architectural Technologists are eligible to apply for Fellow Membership FCIAT.

Fellow Membership complements the 'Chartered Architectural Technologist' professional qualification and is an acknowledgement of significant contribution to and/or excellence in Architectural Technology.

A selection of FCIAT FAQs can be found at: https://architecturaltechnology.com/joining/fellow-membership-fciat/fellow-membership-faqs.html and/or watch a video recorded workshop at: youtube.com/ciatechnologist

Chartered Environmentalist

Chartered Architectural Technologists who have specialised in environmental issues may choose to 'badge' their competence by becoming a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv). This qualification demonstrates your commitment to environmental best practice and a high degree of expertise within the sector.

Reflecting on your experience to date and deciding how you want to continue evolving your skills within this area, count towards your CPD hours as does undergoing the application process to become recognised.

Being registered as a Chartered Environmentalist sets you apart from others working in this field. It establishes proven knowledge, experience and commitment to professional standards, and enhances employability.

The application process consists of submitting a written application which requires you to address the competency statements by demonstrating how you have developed the breadth of knowledge through your work and engaged in sustainable management of the environment jointly with a portfolio of supporting evidence. This is then followed by a professional interview carried out by Chartered Environmentalists.

Conservation

The Institute runs a register for Conservation professionals which is available for Chartered Architectural Technologists wishing to demonstrate that they are competent in the conservation of historical buildings and their surroundings. You have a choice being assessed as either a CIAT-Accredited Conservationist or a CIAT-Recognised Conservationist.

CIAT-Accredited Conservationists are practitioners that take the lead in managing renovations, restorations and play an important part in preserving and conserving the heritage of buildings for future generations. They are recognised by grant/fund aided bodies such as Historic England, Historic Scotland, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Cadw (Welsh Government historic environment service) and the Heritage Lottery fund.

CIAT Accredited Conservationists are also eligible to undertake work as a Quinquennial Inspector.

CIAT-Recognised Conservationists on the other hand are those that have the appropriate knowledge and skills but who do not practise in conservation and instead have demonstrated their competence through the use of case studies.

As part of the application process for either option, you will be assessed and accredited against a set of competences via a written submission and supporting portfolio demonstrating experience in conservation followed by a professional review interview by CIAT-Accredited Conservationists.

Researching, applying and/or sharing these techniques on projects or with colleagues counts as CPD, as does the process of being recognised for your knowledge and expertise in this area.

Principal Designer Register

Launching in May last year, the Principal Designer Register was developed by the Institute and its Principal Designer Competency Steering Group. It is open to all Chartered Architectural Technologists working in industry and running projects from inception to completion.

Although being on the Register is not mandatory, it is advisable as it allows clients, duty-holders and other stakeholders to check through a publicly available Register as to whether the professional/s working on a particular building have been deemed competent.

Understanding what is required to Register as a PD counts towards your 35 hours of CPD. For those that are successful in getting onto the Register, they are required to fulfil CPD requirements specifically relating to the Building Safety Act. Details are provided to the relevant members.

- **Engaging with the Institute**

The Institute would not be in the strong position that it is in without the continued support of its valued members and affiliates. Therefore, any time that you dedicate towards CIAT activity counts towards your CPD hours.

This involvement includes, but is not limited to:

- Being a part of the local Regional/Centre Committee or aspirATion;
- Sitting on any Group, Committee, Taskforce, Board or Panel;
- Providing views on a consultation;
- Submitting articles to *AT Journal*, *aspirATion magazine* and/or;
- Representing the Institute at meetings or events.

As you can see, there are plenty of opportunities to learn and achieve the minimum 35 hours of CPD, and please remember, the 35 hours are across a twelve-month period. Sometimes discussions with a colleague or mentor can inform or inspire you on how to progress with current and future projects and can be far more productive and beneficial to your career than an impersonal course or seminar.

Members and affiliates are also encouraged to send information about any upcoming CPD events to the Communications and Education Departments so that these can be promoted as appropriate. ■

For further information as to what constitutes as CPD, please contact the Education Department on education@ciat.global

1 All members (excluding student members) and affiliates are required to undertake a minimum of 35 hours CPD every year as stated in the Code of Conduct:

"Clause A7: Continuing Professional Development: The members (excluding student members) shall:
A7a) keep themselves informed of current practices and developments appropriate to the type and level of their responsibilities; and
A7b) be able to provide evidence that they have complied with the requirements for continuing Professional development (CPD) as published by the Institute from time to time."
"Clause B7: Continuing Professional Development: Affiliates shall:
B7a) keep themselves informed of current practices and developments appropriate to the type and level of their responsibilities; and
B7b) be able to provide evidence that they have complied with the requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) as published by the Institute from time to time."

2 For more information on how to become a Chartered Architectural Technologist, contact membership@ciat.global

Honorary Officer elections 2025 nominees standing for election

Following the call for nominations in the last issue of *AT Journal*, each candidate now takes the opportunity to present their manifesto.

Honorary Treasurer

Nominated candidate: Hywel Davis MCIAT

I am delighted, honoured and humbled to be nominated for the position of Honorary Secretary.

Background
I began my journey in Architectural Technology in 2000 when I completed an HND at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff and continued with education to obtain a BSc in 2004. I have acquired 20 years professional experience working for both small and medium enterprise architectural practices and AJ Top 100 practices alike, progressing from a Junior Technologist position to intermediate, to senior level, and currently as an Associate at an architectural practice in Chichester, West Sussex. I have worked within the housing, education, arts and culture, historic, and commercial sectors during my career.

I proudly obtained Chartership in 2012 and strived to involve myself within the Institute. The Conduct Committee caught my attention, through my desire to continue progression, improve standards and maintain professionalism through a challenging industry. For over six years I enjoyed the intricacies of the Conduct Committee and learning the principles and basis of standards expected of us all as members and affiliates of the Institute and the mechanisms for protecting the membership and the general public. In recent years, I have stepped over to the Documents Taskforce and I am an active member of the South East Regional Committee, where I have made some great acquaintances.

The Institute today
CIAT provides a great membership experience through Regional and Centre activities, along with the AT Awards and Annual General Meeting, to provide the wider membership an opportunity to assemble and discuss Institute business, progression and debate the changes, challenges, and trends within the built environment sector.

With this in mind, it is vital to ensure our Regulations and policies are upheld to facilitate membership interaction within the Institute, and member involvement with the wider construction industry and the general public. The recent Regulatory Reform, instigated by the Building Safety Act 2022, highlights the requirement to uphold the Institute's regulatory standards and continue to review and implement amendments to the Byelaws and Code of Conduct.

The built environment has faced many challenges over the last ten years, which have included high profile catastrophic events, placing the industry in the limelight and damaging the credibility of all construction industry professionals. The Institute's membership has responded extremely well to this and continues to ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable members and affiliates to follow suitable guidance and regulations, consequently delivering buildings safely to their best endeavours and providing the general public with assurance. The Institute is grounded on the Charter, Byelaws, Regulations and Code of Conduct; these provide the foundation and safety measures of standards and regulation. Further to this, the initiation of the Principal Design Register, along with existing specialist registers for Chartered Environmentalists and CIAT-Accredited Conservationists, provide continuous professional development and enhance our place in the built environment.

The future
The current Honorary Secretary has set a high example of ensuring CIAT as an organisation is able to maintain

I am keen to hear from all members and affiliates, whether they have ideas, concerns or are curious to know more in relation to the governance of the Institute in particular.

and progress the laws and regulatory mechanisms to lead the industry in professional competency and standards. My key undertakings will be to continue building on this strong foundation and continue improvements in the regulatory side of the Institute to aid delivery of the Strategic Plan 2025. I will work closely with the Chief Executive, Executive Board, Council and the staff members to implement the strategic and business plans to the benefit of all members and affiliates of the Institute.

The Institute aims to enhance the value of our profession as Architectural Technologists, and through education, membership, technical and practice avenues, CIAT can raise this awareness within the industry and the wider public. This strategic aim will be underlined by the professional ethics and standards held by the Institute and protected within the Charter, Byelaws, Regulations and Code of Conduct.

The Honorary Secretary position is not necessarily a position within the Institute that drives radical change in relation to membership interaction or the role of ATs in industry and the wider society. However, it is a role that needs to understand the industry trends and developments to ensure the correct implementation of regulation, and changes to policies and systems must be implemented through considered discussion with members, officers, staff and peer institutions. The Institute's purpose is to be the premier representative and regulatory body for Architectural Technology and the community.

Why should I be the Honorary Secretary?
I take pride in professionalism and maintaining a standard in my day-to-day responsibilities as an AT and as a manager within my practice. I take a considered approach to challenges and debates to reach a solution, and I aim to understand and absorb information to make informed decisions. I am willing to review the need for change, however I am resilient and will rebuff change for change's sake in order to protect the standards of the Institute.

In relation to the strategic aims, I believe I will contribute towards raising both the profile of CIAT and awareness through standards protection and development. This will ensure that we promote the Institute's education, practice and professional standards, including the Code of Conduct, which ensures high-quality outcomes, accountability and public protection. As part of the role, I will lead the Conduct Committee, providing guidance and ensure that protocols are followed to allow a fair and appropriate conduct and disciplinary procedure to not only protect the general public, but in turn protect the members of CIAT.

2025 provides great opportunity following on from the regulatory reform within the industry and I look forward to working with as many of you as possible to improve our social, wellbeing, value, and safety and take advantage of the ever-changing built environment.

I am keen to hear from all members and affiliates, whether they have ideas, concerns or are curious to know more in relation to the governance of the Institute in particular. I would be open to discussion with anyone who wishes to approach me with comments or questions in the pursuit of transparency and the improvement of, not only our great Institute, but the construction industry as a whole.

in www.linkedin.com/in/hywel-davis-bsc-hons-msc-mciat-assorics-77450751/

Vice-President Education

Nominated candidate: Paul Laycock MCIAT

Excellence in education now and into the future

Introduction and acknowledgement
I am both honoured and delighted to be nominated again for the position of Vice-President Education in the upcoming September elections. My professional journey began as a Chartered Builder, and I became a member of CIAT in 2004 while serving as a partner in my own design and development practice. It was through my CIAT membership that I found a true professional home; one I have been increasingly proud to represent over the years.

Throughout my involvement with CIAT, I have contributed both locally and nationally. I serve as a member of the Education Board, chair university Accreditation Panels, chair the Moderator's Group and chair the judging panels for the AT Awards | Student. I was one of the first three Assessment Panel moderators appointed and participated in interview panels for prospective members.

My experience in assessing and interviewing prospective members has been put to good use by the Institute in the creation of the Membership Short Course. Now delivered to hundreds of members and affiliates and I have had many comments on how useful the course was in its delivery and content to guide members and affiliates on their journey to successful application and interview. This was added to more recently by videos summarising the course, which continue to increase their viewing statistics.

In my previous time as Vice-President Education, I played a role in developing the apprenticeship standard for Architectural Technology, contributed to the Member Grade Review and more recently the Professional Standards Framework Review, amongst participation in many other reviews and initiatives. I also brought

Throughout my involvement with CIAT, I have contributed both locally and nationally. I serve as a member of the Education Board, chair university Accreditation Panels, chair the Moderator's Group and chair the judging panels for the AT Awards | Student.

the initial idea forward (as I later discovered for the third time) and contributed to establishing the Fellowship grade of membership and supported the formation of the aspiration Groups. Additionally, I have represented the Institute at numerous conferences and exhibitions, consistently advocating for CIAT membership and professional development.

My extensive engagement has allowed me the privilege of working alongside the dedicated staff at Central Office, as well as meeting and collaborating with many members and affiliates from across our Regions and Centres.

The educational landscape in the 21st Century

The landscape of education has undergone significant transformation in recent years. Higher education has become more widely accessible, with funding structures shifting towards student contributions. Simultaneously, economic challenges have heightened the expectations placed on graduates entering the workforce. Within this evolving environment, Architectural Technology has seen a notable increase in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the UK and internationally.

As an academic within higher education, I have witnessed firsthand the impact of these changes. Today's students are increasingly discerning, seeking programmes that offer clear career pathways and strong employment prospects. While employment has always been a primary motivation for pursuing higher education, the current generation of students faces an industry shaped by rapid technological advancements, legislative changes and growing client demands.

The Institute, alongside myself and fellow educators, has worked diligently to uphold and enhance the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Maintaining and improving educational standards is fundamental to the future of our profession.

My first commitment: I will continue to champion the maintenance and enhancement of high-quality Architectural Technology education in the UK and seek to work with Centres to expand this internationally, ensuring that our programmes prepare students for the evolving demands of the industry.

Industry and education: removing barriers, engaging in dialogue and strengthening collaboration

Employment remains a primary motivator for university students, just as employers seek graduates equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to contribute effectively to their organisations. Establishing and reinforcing strong links between industry and education is therefore essential.

Dialogue and collaboration are crucial for both educators and industry professionals. Engaging with industry helps educational institutions align their curricula with current professional requirements, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for their careers. Conversely, industry engagement with academia provides employers with a clearer understanding of educational outcomes and graduate capabilities.

My second commitment: I will promote and facilitate stronger collaboration between industry and education, fostering partnerships that enhance the employability of our graduates and align academic programmes with industry needs.

Expanding horizons: the evolving role of the Architectural Technologist and CIAT's profile

In my role as a membership interviewer, I have had the privilege of meeting outstanding professionals whose expertise and dedication continue to elevate the profession. Their passion and commitment reinforce the immense potential of Architectural Technologists within the built environment.

Recognising and embracing the expanding opportunities available to Architectural Technology graduates is crucial for the profession's future. Architectural Technologists are well-positioned to drive innovation in the built environment, integrating emerging technologies, developing new materials and processes and leading the way in sustainable and efficient design practices.

If our profession is to continue evolving and gaining prominence, we must ensure that students and graduates fully understand the breadth of career opportunities available to them. Raising awareness of these possibilities is essential to advancing both the profession and CIAT's standing within the industry.

My third commitment: I will advocate for the expansion of the Architectural Technologist's role and work to enhance CIAT's reputation as a professional body representing leading-edge practitioners in the built environment.

Research and development: Architectural Technologists at the forefront of innovation

Building upon the themes of professional development and industry collaboration, it is crucial to explore the role of Architectural Technologists in research and development. A natural extension of industry-education collaboration is the engagement of Architectural Technologists in research projects that address real-world challenges.

By contributing to the advancement of materials, construction techniques, and design methodologies, Architectural Technologists can establish themselves as key players in shaping the future of the built environment. Encouraging greater involvement in research and development will not only enhance professional expertise but also reinforce the credibility and influence of Architectural Technology as a discipline.

My fourth commitment: I will support and promote the involvement of Architectural Technologists in research and development initiatives, ensuring that our profession remains at the forefront of innovation in the built environment.

In conclusion

My candidacy is not based on promises of radical change but rather on a commitment to building upon the strong foundation already established by my work and that of my predecessors and fellow members. My

priorities align with the ongoing progression of the Institute and the profession, focusing on excellence in education, industry collaboration and the continued elevation of the Architectural Technologist's role.

I offer my experience as both an academic and practitioner, dedicated to championing high-quality education, fostering strong partnerships between industry and academia, broadening career opportunities for graduates, and supporting research initiatives.

Architectural Technology, as a profession, holds a crucial place in the future of the built environment. As Vice-President Education, I will actively advocate for its continued growth and recognition, ensuring that CIAT remains a leading voice in shaping the built environment of the 21st Century.

Vice-President Practice

Nominated candidate: Adrian Fleet MCIAT

I am honoured to stand for the position of Vice-President Practice, and I want to take this opportunity to share why I believe I'm the right person for the role.

Practice

The meaning of 'practice' as a member or affiliate of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists is increasingly diverse. Whether you are a sole practitioner, an apprentice, a director in a larger firm, or a researcher, we all face the dynamic and evolving landscape of our profession. One day we are navigating the latest proposals for Approved Document Part B, the next we are tackling a client challenge that does not align with guidance on the Building Safety Act. And that is before we even consider the complexities of thermal modelling, planning validation, Professional Indemnity Insurance, or the negotiation of client fees. These are just a few of the core Technologist responsibilities, and the list goes on.

> **If I am elected, my focus is simple: to make sure that CIAT provides the guidance, advocacy and support that every member and affiliate needs to thrive in practice.**

I recognise that practice can be both challenging and rewarding. That is exactly where the Vice-President Practice role becomes critical. The Practice Department already provides outstanding support for members and affiliates, helping us navigate the complexities of our day-to-day work. Although I have had the privilege of observing the invaluable work of previous Vice-Presidents and speaking with the current incumbent, Dan Clements, I recognise there is always more to learn. What I can promise is this: no one is more passionate about supporting you in practice than I am. I am committed to ensuring that CIAT equips you with the tools and resources for practice that makes your membership invaluable.

As a Chartered Architectural Technologist running a practice of eight, I spend my days working at the heart of practice – navigating contracts, regulations, client expectations and the ever-changing demands of our profession. I know the challenges we face daily, but I also see the opportunities we have to strengthen our profession and support each other.

What I stand for

1. Supporting you in practice

We all know how tough it can be to stay on top of regulations, contracts and best practices. I want to make sure we have clear guidance, practical tools and CPD resources that actually help us in real-world situations. As an example, I would seek ways in which we can support you to execute the role of BSA Principal Designer with appropriate documentation.

Whether you are a sole practitioner, or part of a larger firm, I want you to feel confident that CIAT has your back when it comes to practice matters.

2. Strong business models

I hear many members calling for greater recognition, higher fees and increased salaries. I firmly believe the key to achieving this begins with building a strong business model at the individual practice level. When your practice operates efficiently, you can elevate your work to set new standards and in turn invest in marketing, which in turn drives recognition, and allows you to command the fees and salaries you deserve. Understanding your numbers and implementing effective procedures are essential to securing the right projects at the right rates.

I also recognise the pressure of competing with low-fee providers and the challenges it brings. Building on the excellent work already done by the Practice Department, I am committed to providing the tools and resources that will help you drive your business forward and, in turn, elevate the profession. As an example, I would look to provide an updated fee calculator and business operations cheat sheets, helping you to navigate the changing business market.

3. Collaboration within CIAT

I want to build stronger connections between members and affiliates so we can learn from each other's experiences and challenges. Working closely with the President, Vice-President Technical and Vice-President Education, I will ensure that practice and technical advancements go hand in hand, helping us all adapt to new technologies, regulations, and industry shifts.

Why me?

I am in your shoes — grappling with the same day-to-day issues that all of us face in practice. I have a practical, problem-solving mindset, always looking for ways to make things clearer, easier, and more effective.

I have been involved with CIAT since 2011, starting out as Regional Secretary to the East Anglia Region, moving to Councillor, spending time as a Councillor Trustee on Executive Board, and now holding the position of Co-Chair for East Anglia. I have a good understanding of how the Institute operates and would now like to support members and affiliates from the position of Vice-President Practice. I am committed to making CIAT even more relevant, useful, and supportive for our membership.

Let's do this together

If I am elected, my focus is simple: to make sure that CIAT provides the guidance, advocacy and support that every member and affiliate needs to thrive in practice.

I would love to hear your thoughts, concerns, and ideas. This is our profession, and we all have a stake in shaping its future.

Thank you for your time and support — I look forward to working with you!

Nominated candidate: Adam Newell FCIAT

It is an honour to be able to address you and ask for your support in my bid to be elected as your Vice-President Practice. Anyone who knows me knows of my passion for our profession, and I would be proud to represent us. Please take some time to read my manifesto, which introduces me and outlines what I hope to contribute.

Who am I?

Some of you may know me from my work with CIAT, or from meeting at the AT Awards or AGMs. I always try to meet as many members and affiliates as possible. I am Adam Newell FCIAT, born in 1983. I have worked as an Architectural Technologist since 2006, currently with BDP on prestigious landmarks. I have been an active member of the Greater London Regional Committee since 2013, where I have played a key part in building a strong team, holding roles like Secretary, Chair, Treasurer, and Councillor. As Councillor for the past five years, I have served on the Conduct Committee, Executive Board and represented CIAT at various events.

I value my CIAT membership and consider becoming Chartered a key career milestone, thus I help the next generation through mentorship. I have developed a keen interest in both sustainability and our built heritage, for which I think there is a unique challenge with respect to conservation requiring an innovative solution for a sustainable future.

As I apply for the Vice-President Practice position, I want to emphasise my generalist experience across various practice forms through my journey to date, which gives me a unique insight into the vast range of different practices and skillsets our membership has to offer.

My journey

When I began my journey in 2002, I was unsure of my career path. I enrolled in an undergraduate BSc in Architectural Technology at Napier University in Edinburgh, driven by my passion for our built environment. Promoted by my lecturer, Robert Mason PPCIAT MCIAT, I joined CIAT and have since built a career aligned with my strengths and interests. Over the past 20 years, I have worked on prestigious landmarks across the UK and Ireland, thanks to the support and recognition I have received as a member of CIAT. After completing my undergraduate degree in 2006, I moved to Galway to work for Dooley Architects. I worked on various projects, including a town centre development, using Revit.

While enjoying the work, I began planning my next career step. With guidance from my old lecturers, I enrolled in the MSc in Technical Architecture at Sheffield Hallam University. Returning home for the summer, I worked for William Lippe in Inverurie to assist with barn conversions. Upon starting my Masters, I joined WCEC in Chesterfield, where I worked on supermarkets. The experience was enjoyable and provided valuable insights into large-scale projects, contracts, sites and processes. My interest in sustainability led me to become a BREEAM assessor and BREEAM AP. I have always been interested in history and our built heritage, possibly from growing up in a 300-year-old Coaching Inn in Aberdeenshire. I started an MA in Conservation and Regeneration at Sheffield University in 2011. To diversify, I moved to London in 2012 and worked on very high-end residential projects for a prestigious little practice in Notting Hill.

I completed my Masters and became Chartered in 2013, joining the Greater London Regional Committee. A move to McBains, a medium-sized multidisciplinary company, broadened my experiences working on exciting projects like police HQs, care homes and motor retail. I was offered a chance to work on the Palace of Westminster, leading me to join BDP in 2019, where I remain. In addition to my work with BDP, I own Penguin Architecture, a small CIAT Chartered Practice. I enjoy the personal connections that accompany small-scale domestic work while I learn to run a business. I became a Fellow member of CIAT in 2023.

Why me?

I do not advocate radical change. I believe the Institute is in a great place as we continue to grow. Our Central Office staff team and members and affiliates who support us have made this possible. Without their support, we would not be in this strong position. I want to continue helping and supporting the team as we enter our 60th year. I bring my personal strengths, interests and varied career to the team, providing a broad understanding of our diverse membership and their unique talents.

I have a proven record as an ambassador for the CIAT brand and come to this with the full support of BDP, giving me the time, passion, and energy to fulfil the role. I wish to promote a culture of curiosity and community. I am very good at being the catalyst which brings people together. I can build and lead teams and provide

I am a strong believer in the work of our Institute and believe that we have an opportunity to make a real difference for the benefit of all our members, affiliates and the wider society.

enablement and direction. I think we are stronger together. I work for a global organisation, from which I am able to help support our recognition out with the UK.

With an understanding of sustainability and part of the Building Safety group at BDP, for which I am completing my BRPD HRB registration, I am well placed to support our main goals of low carbon and building safety.

What I hope to achieve during my term?

While supporting the Practice Department and representing CIAT when appropriate, I would like to focus on my interests aligned with our Strategic Plan: low carbon and our built heritage. The success of CIAT relies on our prestigious brand being recognised in the highest regard. This recognition comes from demonstrating a trusted sense of accountability, responsibility, and integrity; simply put, by doing a good job. Being part of a larger team, sharing resources and ideas, helps us achieve this. CIAT is the catalyst that helps us connect.

A core goal of our Strategic Plan is recognition. As we continue to prove our worth, this recognition will follow. This is evident within the industry; a change I have witnessed over recent years. With this recognition, others will want to work with us, and this in turn promotes the values of being a member. For me, we are a small family, and strength comes from our collective efforts.

As Vice-President Practice, I want to focus on helping people connect. I do this already at a local level at work and within the Greater London community and can scale this up as Vice-President Practice by strengthening links and building relationships. I am keen to engage with as many members and affiliates in all varieties of practice as possible. It is important to understand the challenges our membership is facing and work to overcome them.

Collaboration with the other Vice-Presidents is essential to this as we draw people through university and give them the tools to perform their unique skills. I understand the intricacies of the rapid pace of legislation change in the built environment and will be available to assist members and affiliates in addressing challenges like the Building Safety Act or potential planning reforms.

The new societies, Digital and Sustainability, I think are a great initiative. I can help build on this as I bring my own expertise. We are a global organisation which I think can feel difficult sometimes to bring people together when considering there are so many things which are different: legislations, markets, etc. There are, however, many things which make us the same. Sustainability and conservation are global common values that unite us. Bringing people together to focus on a particular subject where there is a common theme will give us the basis to foster collaboration from which other conversations will grow. Using my interest and accolade in conservation, I would like to champion the creation of a Heritage and Culture Society. I believe this, along with our Sustainability Society, holds the key in helping our global community come together. Our industry has so many facets; however, it is the desire to build sustainably within the context of our built heritage and culture that is central to the DNA of Architectural Technology and the common thread which we all understand and have something to contribute towards.

To conclude

The world has changed since CIAT's inception on 12 February 1965. However, in 1965, the Institute was formed by a group of individuals of like-minds who came together with a common purpose. They met regularly, becoming friends, and the Institute grew from this fellowship. The way we communicate has changed. The way we work has changed. However, the sense of camaraderie and being part of a team is still true today.

Yes, CPDs, technical conferences, etc., can and should be centralised; however, getting people together, face-to-face, is where the real magic happens, and remains the key to the continued success of the Institute. I wish to help and promote this as much as possible.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve for the past twelve years in various capacities and look forward to the busy times ahead. The success of the Institute is very important to me, and it would be a great honour to serve you in this position. I am a strong believer in the work of our Institute and believe that we have an opportunity to make a real difference for the benefit of all our members, affiliates and the wider society. With this, I seek your vote, as I strive to work on your behalf for the betterment of our institute.

Get in touch

in https://www.linkedin.com/in/adam-newell-fciat-8436a545/
adam.newell@BDP.com

What happens next?

Candidates gave presentations at the Council meeting held on 8 March and we encourage you to liaise with your local Regional/Centre committee or aspiration Group about these for feedback and discussion.

There will be an online Hustings held during the election campaign with all candidates – please look out for this when it is advertised.

These manifestos were also issued to members and affiliates by email and can be found on our website. A campaign trail is now in progress with the election taking place at Council on 13 September 2025.

Key dates summary

Campaigning by candidates:
3 March – 12 September 2025 inclusive

Election ealerts and updates on the website:
3 March – 12 September 2025 inclusive

Election at Council:
13 September 2025

Candidates advised if not in attendance at Council
Ealert announcing the election results:
15 September 2025

Assumption of position:
22 November 2025 (close of 2025 AGM)

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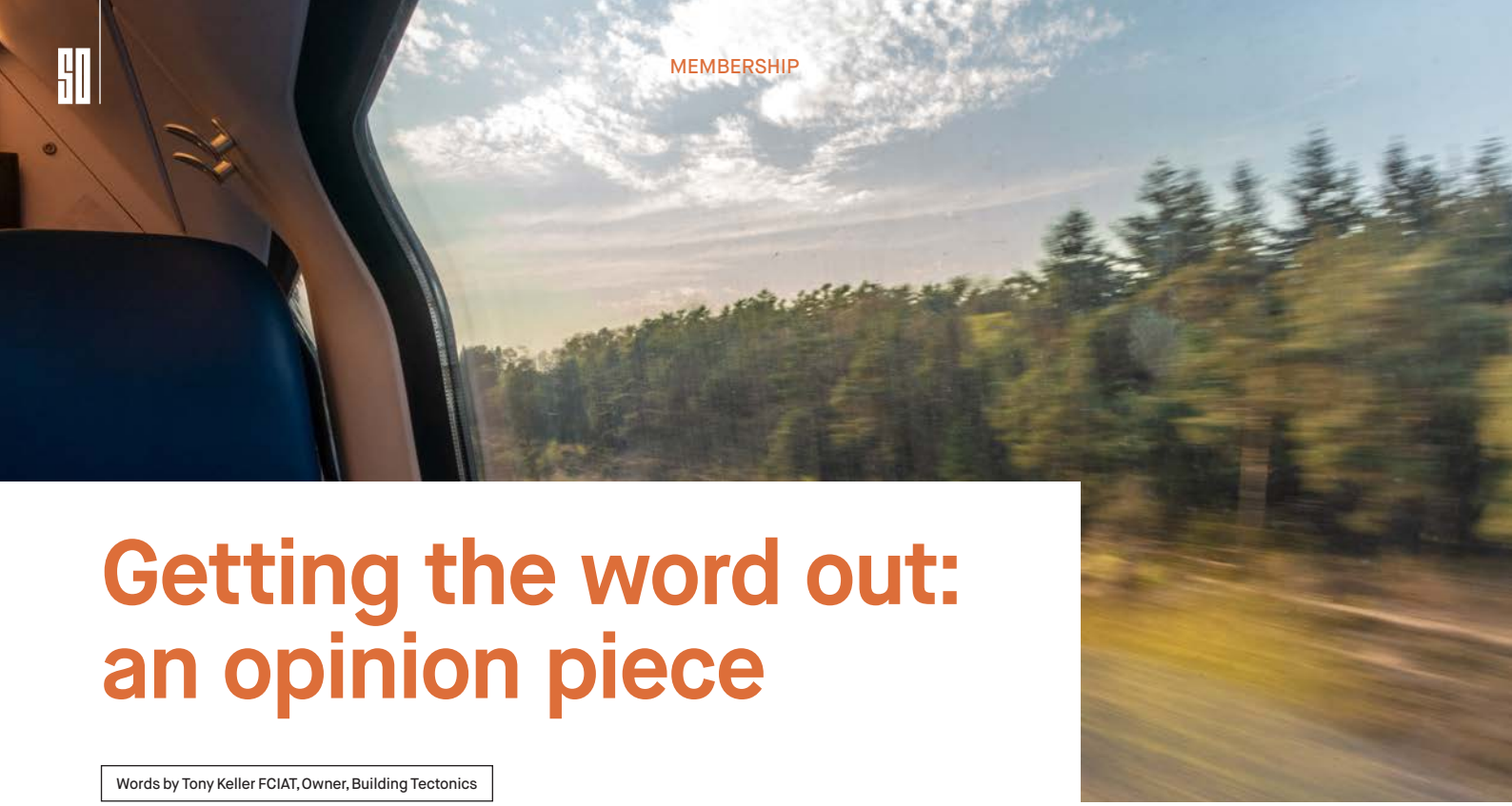

Getting the word out: an opinion piece

Words by Tony Keller FCIAT, Owner, Building Tectonics

Compelled by my general frustration with the problem that us practitioners face in the field every working day, I tried the following experiment. On the train, on the way back from an exhibition about building products, I asked some fellow travellers to give me some words they associate with "building".

This is what I got:
skyscraper, demolition, façade, renovation, erection, structure, masonry, structure, house, hut, construction, cottage, shed, cabin.
You will note that technology wasn't one of them. Okay, so this little experiment was not very scientific, not particularly representative and very small scale, but my guess is that you could ask a hundred people and the words *technology*, *technological* or *technical* would not be mentioned, let alone words like *scientific*, *knowledge* or *complicated*.

As I see it, the big problem is that the general public think that building is no more complex than nailing two bits of wood together with a spiky thing called a nail or gluing two bricks together with this grey stuff called cement. Let's take the particular example of this 'cement' stuff.
We know that in reality it isn't just cement and that when it sets it's a chemical process and not just because it dries out. But the general public doesn't.

Now, the upshot of this is that, if the perception is that building is simple, then it stands to reason that there can't be much technology to it and that therefore no wonder people look bemused when we say we are Architectural Technologists, because this will be an oxymoron to them. It is not the same for architects, because in the public's mind, they have a perceived role – they design things after all.

Interestingly, even though architects think they are the doyens of "building technology", the general public will more often ask a builder for advice on why they have a damp problem or a roofer if the roof is caving in than an architect. But even many experienced builders and craftsmen who have been in the industry for years don't know of us, or CIAT either.

We need to address this. In my view this should be the main challenge and the goal we should set ourselves: not just crudely to publicise our abilities and willingness to help, but to educate the public. This is part of our manifesto I note, to educate, but I would guess this is more a reference to our desire to educate the initiated whereas it is the uninitiated that we should concentrate on – namely the general public.

How do we do this? Simple: schools. Simple but not a quick fix I grant you. We should have a programme, aimed at taking the message into schools, the message that building is not simple. It is a technology which has its roots in history, but now, at its technological pinnacle, in chemistry, physics, metallurgy, nanotechnology, information technology and increasingly so in biology and very soon even artificial intelligence. I would like to see CIAT put together a working party to discuss how to get the message across to the students (the younger the better) but equally importantly, the teachers and the parents.

Taking the message into schools could be a force multiplier, because by inculcating this part of the population it would help the construction industry recruit the calibre of kids it will need to move away from being one of the most inefficient and unproductive sectors of the economy and instead, to something more effective at dealing with the challenges we face in the UK, such as energy conservation or the housing crisis to name but two.

Perhaps by us focusing on giving a broader message to those at school about building technology and the process, we could help transform the industry, get CIAT the kudos it deserves, and maybe even even help small practices like mine get more attention and enquiries, and thus customers. ■

Membership news

Chartered Architectural Technologists

We would like to congratulate the following who successfully attended their Professional Interview and are now Chartered Architectural Technologists, MCIAT:

029592	Jonathan Grant	Northern, 01
032580	Gregor Hosie	Northern, 01
036130	Idaah Ajene	Yorkshire, 02
025165	Craig Bull	Yorkshire, 02
033283	Owen Clarricoates	Yorkshire, 02
039279	Raychelle Lemi	Yorkshire, 02
038196	James Nolan	Yorkshire, 02
025433	Robert Foster	North West, 03
033716	Richard Johnson	North West, 03
038201	Joe Simcock	North West, 03
029854	Jack Cannon	East Midlands, 04
027281	Amandeep Kaur	West Midlands, 05
034847	Gareth Thomas	West Midlands, 05
019007	Dean O'Riordan	Wessex, 06
022296	Marta Castrillo Blanco	East Anglia, 07
029459	Amelia Chasey	East Anglia, 07
033710	Barbara Beraldo Banuls	Central, 08
023004	Gary Cooper	Central, 08
029219	Raymond Van der Walt	Central, 08
039178	Jieqi Ge	Greater London, 09
038203	Homeira Shayesteh	Greater London, 09
036186	Dipak Vekaria	Greater London, 09
031920	Dean Rose	South East, 10
038809	Selena Pryce	Western, 12
038740	Stewart Russell	Scotland West, 13
024128	Euan Mackenzie	Scotland East, 14
032349	Craig McMahon	Scotland East, 14
037858	Harshul Singh	Northern Ireland, 15

Welcome back

We would like to welcome back the following Chartered Architectural Technologists:

024173	Sajan Varghese	East Anglia, 07
014916	Ian Sherlock	South East, 10
011406	Neil Clubb	Scotland West, 13
022596	Naomi Fyfe	Northern Ireland, 15
027885	John Duffy	Republic of Ireland, C2
024770	James O'Mahony	Republic of Ireland, C2
013970	Shane Quinn	Middle East & Africa, C7

Fellow Members

We would like to congratulate the following Member who successfully completed their application and is now a Fellow Member, FCIAT:

011782	Jean Colback	Northern, 01
030397	Joshua Banks	North West, 03
018843	Christopher Curtis	Wessex, 06
010297	Alexander Naraian	South East, 10
018898	Emma Hayes	Republic of Ireland, C2

Registered Principal Designer

We would like to congratulate the following Member who successfully attained their Registered Principal Designer non-HRBs and HRBs qualification:

025722	Paul Brown	Yorkshire, 02
009906	Tina Dufty	Wessex, 06
009091	Andrew Rayner	Central, 08

CIAT-Accredited Conservationist

We would like to congratulate the following Member who has successfully been reaccredited for their CIAT-Accredited Conservationist qualification:

008915	Ian Alderton	East Anglia, 07

In memoriam

We regret to announce the death of the following members and affiliates:

030485	Pascal Arquier	South East, 10
001481	Gerald Colwell	Wales, 16

Exclusive Insurance Scheme For Chartered Architectural Technologists

CIAT INSURANCE SERVICES

MFL have been providing bespoke insurance solutions for Members of CIAT for over 25 years.

Key Benefits:

- Competitive premiums
- Enhanced cover
- In- house claims service
- Free contract vetting service
- Free legal helpline

"We offer a suite of insurance products, claims and risk management services, including a bespoke Professional Indemnity Insurance scheme, as an exclusive membership benefit to Members of CIAT."

Who are CIAT Insurance Services?

MFL Insurance Group Limited and the Chartered Insitute of Architectural Technologists have worked together for over 25 years providing Members with bespoke insurance solutions specific to the work their members carry out.

What types of policies and services can you assist with?

We offer a suite of insurance products, claims and risk management services, including a bespoke Professional Indemnity Insurance scheme, as an exclusive membership benefit to Chartered Architectural Technologists.

What differentiates CIAT Insurance Services from other insurance brokers or insurers?

We are a trusted partner who understands your profession. We assist CIAT Members on a daily basis, which enables us to maintain a comprehensive understanding of your profession and its unique requirements. Assisting CIAT Members provides us with a wider view of the risks, challenges, trends and new developments that may impact you and your business. Our experienced insurance advisors are on hand to assist you.

Do you assist Members of CIAT with claims?

Yes, we are particularly proud of our in-house claims service. Our experienced team, many of whom have a legal background, are on hand to support and advise you throughout the claims process. We regularly receive referrals from clients who have had a claim and have appreciated the high standard of service provided by our claims team.

Are off-the-shelf insurance policies suitable for Members of CIAT?

Off-the-shelf insurance policies may not accommodate some of the unique risks and challenges faced by CIAT members. CIAT facility policies are developed exclusively for CIAT Members, with tailored coverage underwritten by Insurers on our behalf.

It's also important that CIAT Members receive suitable advice when purchasing their insurance policies. We often work with new clients who have inadvertently purchased policies with onerous terms and conditions that does not meet their requirements, or excludes retroactive coverage despite maintaining consecutive policies for a number of years. These errors can be costly for a Member in the event of a claim, so it's important that the right advice is provided from an experienced and trusted advisor.

We regularly test and benchmark premiums and cover alternatives to ensure that we consistently provide quality insurance coverage for a competitive premium.

What other benefits and services do you offer to Members of CIAT?

We offer a free contract vetting service where we can review your contracts in relation to whether they impose obligations which may not be covered by your professional indemnity insurance.

In addition we offer a free legal helpline provided via a high profile law firm for one-off queries relating to the conduct of your business.

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