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# SPEC FINISH

**FIS**

The magazine of FIS  
representing the finishes  
and interiors sector

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## BUILDING THE NORTHERN POWERHOUSE

**Sustainability:**

FIS Project Reuse –  
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Reflecting on 21 years  
of Space

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Collateral warranties and  
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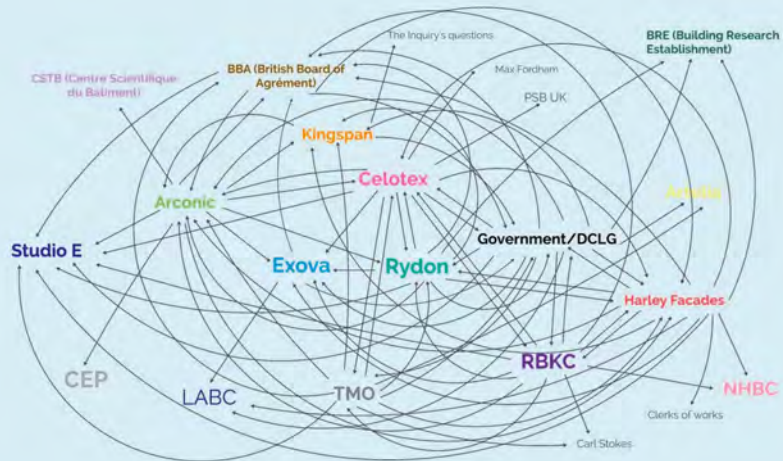
*\*\*All testimonials are from real Trim-Tex customers.*



# A WEB OF RESPONSIBILITY: GRENFELL INQUIRY DEMANDS CULTURE CHANGE

The publication of the Grenfell Inquiry Report Part 2 is a landmark for the sector - the 1,700+ pages carry one fundamental and damning indictment - that the deaths were avoidable and the people in the tower were failed multiple times by legislation, procurement, design, construction, manufacture, building management, and in response to the fire.

## THE GRENFELL 'WEB OF BLAME'



**IAIN MCILWEE**  
Chief Executive,  
Finishes and  
Interiors Sector



The Inquiry was divided into two phases; **Phase 1** which addressed the events on the night of the fire; and **Phase 2** which investigated the wider situation, looking to understand the underlying causes and mistakes, bringing forward information and making recommendations that can be used to ensure a similar disaster does not happen again. I commend it to you, at least read the executive summary (or the summary we have written on the FIS website<sup>1</sup>).

Beyond the blame and recommendations, I want to draw attention to a couple of insights contained in the report that link to themes referenced previously in this column.

### Modern methods of procurement and "value engineering"

It was highlighted that in the tender process, parties were appointed that were clearly not competent to fulfil the functions that they were allocated. This type of cost engineering is not what we mean by modern method of procurement:

"Although Rydon's (the appointed main contractor) tender was judged to be the most competitive, it still exceeded the Tenant

Management Organisation's (TMO) budget. As a result, although the TMO had received advice from its lawyers that it would be improper to do so, it entered into discussions with Rydon before the procurement process had been completed leading to an agreement that, if Rydon were awarded the contract, it would reduce its price to an acceptable level!"

Value engineering is inevitable, but this is not that, this is a fixation to reduce cost ultimately at all costs - the lines and limits have to be more clearly drawn in the future. The "**Responsible No**".

### Managing design development

The design process (or lack thereof) also came under heavy fire, this was exacerbated by poor contracts and process control that ultimately led to confusion in terms of responsibility:

"Studio E (architect), Rydon (main contractor), and Harley (cladding specialist) all took a casual approach to contractual relations. They did not properly understand the nature and scope of the obligations they had undertaken, or, if they did, paid scant attention to them. They failed to identify their own responsibilities for important aspects of the design and in each case assumed that someone else was responsible for matters affecting fire safety. Everyone involved in the choice of the materials to be used in the external wall thought that responsibility for their suitability and safety lay with someone else."

There are reminders throughout that, not being told and ignorance is not an effective



excuse – there were repeated failures to ask and clarify. The "**Responsible No**".

### Industry response

The report is a hard read, not because it is not well written, but because it rightly pulls no punches. It is an excellent, accessible, and clear summary of the environment and events that led to the tragedy that was Grenfell, and that frankly is a hard read. If we look around and consider where we are as an industry, we have to acknowledge that the underlying culture that caused this tragedy has become endemic in working practices and is part of the sector's culture – this has to change, we have to change.

The Report presents 58 recommendations. I won't summarise them here; instead, I will give the final word to Architect and Inquiry panel member Thouria Istephan: "Put simply, if you work in the construction industry and you do not feel the weight of responsibility you have for keeping people safe, you are in the wrong job."

Source

1. <https://www.thefis.org/2024/09/05/grenfell-inquiry-key-conclusions-and-recommendations-for-the-finishes-and-interiors-sector>

Welcome

# SPEC FINISH

## CONTACT US

### EDITORIAL

Editor:

David Crowson

Email:

david.crowson@warnersgroup.co.uk

SpecFinish

Warners Group Publications

West Street

Bourne

Lincs PE10 9PH

### ADVERTISING

Advertising enquiries:

Theresa Geeson

Email:

theresag@warnersgroup.co.uk

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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info@thefis.org or telephone

0121 707 0077.

## FIS

### FIS

Tel: 0121 707 0077

www.thefis.org

Email: info@thefis.org

FIS, Unit 4, Olton Bridge

245 Warwick Rd

Solihull, West Midlands

B92 7AH

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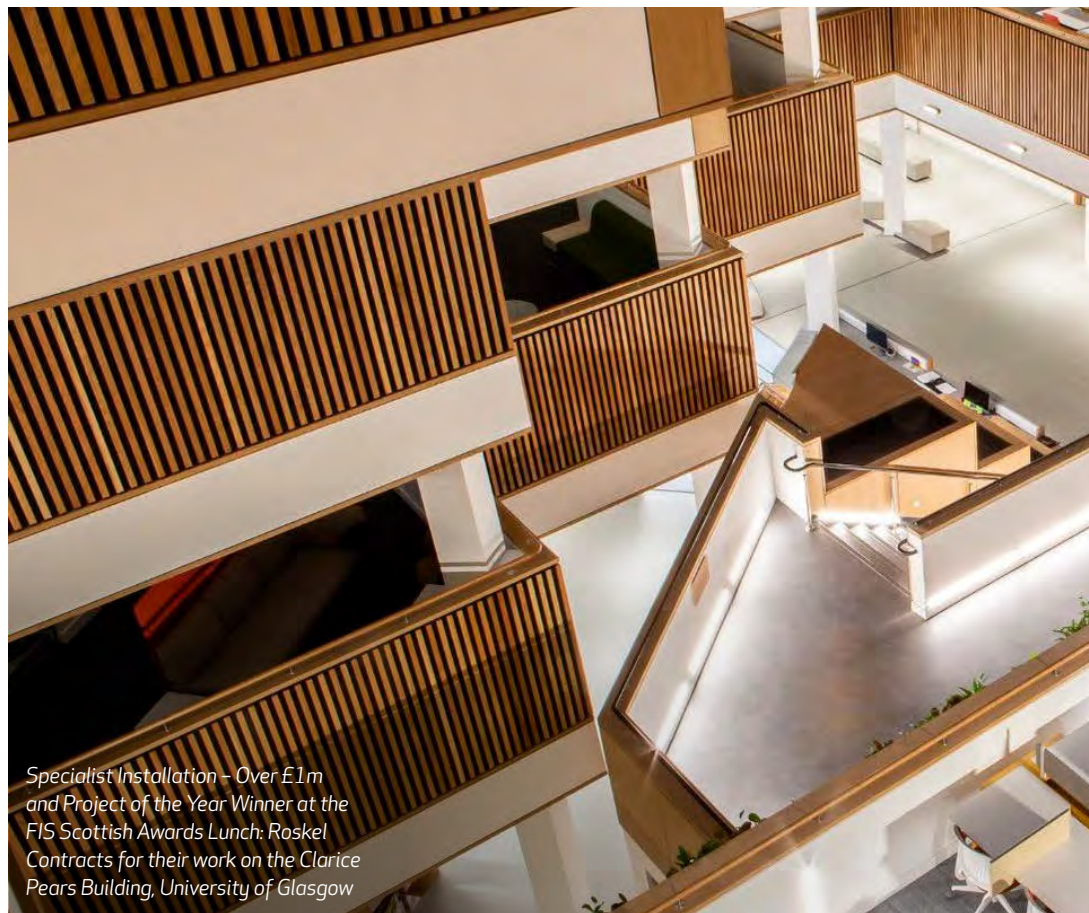
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Cover image:

Richard Coffey Managing Director at F & T Terrix at the latest roundtable event held in Manchester in July

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Specialist Installation – Over £1m  
and Project of the Year Winner at the  
FIS Scottish Awards Lunch: Roskel  
Contracts for their work on the Clarice  
Pears Building, University of Glasgow

# WELCOME

## TO THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF SPECFINISH

Since our last issue, the UK headlines have been dominated by Labour's victory in the general election and the launch of their key reforms, which include improvements to public services, economic growth initiatives, and resolutions to social issues.

A notable policy impacting our industry is the Government's plan to address the housing crisis by constructing 1.5 million new homes over the next ten years. This initiative includes accelerating development on brownfield sites and reforming planning laws to facilitate construction in high-demand areas. On page 22, Dr. Noble Francis, Economics Director at the Construction Products Association (CPA), offers his insights on these ambitious objectives, which have generated both optimism and apprehension within the industry.

A challenge for the Government will also be addressing the construction skills shortage. On page 8, Justin Devaney, Operations Director at Platt & Reilly, discusses an untapped opportunity: a viable and sustainable workforce made up of currently underemployed individuals in the UK. With the right support and opportunities, these individuals could become valuable contributors to the industry.

On page 24, we celebrate outstanding projects completed by FIS members across Scotland at the FIS Scottish Awards Lunch, held at the amazing Voco Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.



Please let us know about your projects and company news as we do like to feature members as much as we can. No project too small... david.crowson@warnersgroup.co.uk

www.thefis.org

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Recognising and celebrating the outstanding projects completed by FIS members across Scotland.



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## EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS



**Joe Cilia**  
Joe is FIS Technical Director



**Neil Miller**  
Neil is Sales and Marketing Director at QIC



**Beena Nana**  
Beena is FIS Head of Skills and Training



**James Parlour**  
James is FIS Technical and Vetting Manager



**Justin Devaney**  
Justin is Operations Director at Platt & Reilly



**Dr Noble Francis**  
Noble is Economics Director at the Construction Products Association (CPA)



**Flavie Lowres**  
Flavie is FIS Sustainability Champion



**Alastair Dean**  
Alastair is Partner at DAC Beachcroft



**Nick Bond**  
Nick is Managing Director and Founder of Space Interior Systems



**Jonathan Bond**  
Jonathan is Partner at DAC Beachcroft



**Kelly Goldsmith**  
Kelly is Head of Marketing at Amron Architectural

## CPA publishes summer construction industry forecasts

The Construction Products Association (CPA) recently reported that total construction output is expected to decline by 2.9% this year, followed by a recovery of 2.0% in 2025. This forecast is slightly more negative than anticipated three months ago.

The recent downgrade in the forecasts is primarily due to recovery in the two largest construction sectors, private housing new build and repair, maintenance and improvement, being pushed back.

This is in response to a slowdown in demand and sentiment in the broader housing market since Easter following the uptick in mortgage rates. Despite this, the forecasts for the other key construction sectors remain similar to three months ago, with many firms operating in industrial, commercial refurbishment, and fit-out or working on major infrastructure projects continuing to experience robust activity.

To download the report in full visit: [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/cpamarketdata/](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/cpamarketdata/)

[www.constructionproducts.org.uk](http://www.constructionproducts.org.uk)



## A new Government signals the call for a new dawn in construction

On Thursday 4 July, the opposition Labour Party, led by Keir Starmer, defeated the governing Conservative Party, led by Rishi Sunak. The FIS extended its congratulations to the new UK Prime Minister and his colleagues on their election success as Labour forms the new Government.

FIS CEO Iain McIlwee remarked: "A new dawn for the UK means it is essential to deliver a new dawn for construction. The UK construction industry is at the beating heart of the country, enabling all other parts of society and the economy to function and succeed. The construction sector is worth 9% of GDP and employs over 2.5 million people. But it is more than that as it provides our homes and infrastructure, shapes our cities, preserves our heritage, offers shelter, and influences our lives. Great buildings are at the heart of a great nation."

To read the story in full visit:

[www.specfinish.co.uk/fis-welcomes-government-and-calls-for-a-new-dawn-for-construction-too](http://www.specfinish.co.uk/fis-welcomes-government-and-calls-for-a-new-dawn-for-construction-too)

## Grenfell Tower Inquiry publishes its second and final report

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry has published its second and final report<sup>1</sup> into the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire at Grenfell Tower in the early hours of 14 June 2017. Phase Two of the Inquiry examined the underlying causes of the fire to identify where mistakes were made and how Grenfell Tower came to be in a condition that allowed the fire to spread as identified in Phase One. It also investigated the authorities' response to the emergency.

Introducing the report, Inquiry Chairman, the Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick, explained that the second part of the investigation took longer than originally expected because, as the investigation progressed, the Inquiry uncovered many more matters of concern than had previously been anticipated.

Sir Martin said: "The Inquiry report finds that the deaths that occurred were all avoidable and that those who lived in Grenfell Tower were badly failed over a number of years by those responsible for ensuring the safety of its occupants. While not all of these bear the same degree of responsibility for the eventual disaster, all contributed to it in one way or another, in most cases through incompetence, but in some cases through dishonesty and greed"

Former housing association chief executive and panel member Ali Akbar OBE said: "I hope that our report acts as a reminder to the clients of future building projects – including social housing providers – that they have a responsibility to the users of their buildings to ensure that safety is not sacrificed to the demands of speed and cost.

"We cannot, in a few words, do full justice to the totality of our report. What is needed is for those with responsibility for building safety to read the report, reflect on it, and treat Grenfell as a touchstone in all that they do in the future. To act with professionalism, competence, and to put people first."

Recommendations put forward by the Inquiry panel include:

- bringing responsibility for all aspects of fire safety under one Government department;
- the appointment of a construction regulator to oversee all aspects of the construction industry;
- the establishment of a body of professional fire engineers, properly regulated and with protected status and the introduction of mandatory fire safety strategies for higher-risk buildings;
- a licensing scheme for contractors wishing to undertake the construction or

- refurbishment of higher-risk buildings;
- the regulation and mandatory accreditation of fire risk assessors;
- the establishment of a College of Fire and Rescue to provide practical, educational, and managerial training to fire and rescue services;
- the introduction of a requirement for the Government to maintain a publicly accessible record of recommendations made by select committees, coroners and public inquiries, describing the steps taken in response or its reasons for declining to implement them.

To read the story in full visit:

[www.specfinish.co.uk/grenfell-tower-inquiry-publishes-its-second-and-final-report](http://www.specfinish.co.uk/grenfell-tower-inquiry-publishes-its-second-and-final-report)



Source

1. [www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-2-report](http://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-2-report)

# WALLS AS A SYSTEM

**Joe Cilia**, FIS Technical Director, discusses the new FIS guide 'Walls as a system' which explains how to ensure interfaces, penetrations, glazing, and doors have compatible and compliant test evidence.



Joe Cilia, FIS  
Technical Director

Buildings are composed of various products and systems that are assembled into supersystems, such as the structure, roof, façade, M&E (Mechanical and Electrical), and fit-out. However, the interfaces between these products, systems, and supersystems are sometimes designed in isolation, without considering the compatibility of compliant test evidence.

To help address this, FIS along with support from the industry, has produced a 'Walls as a system' guide which is aimed at everyone involved in designing, specifying, procuring, installing, inspecting, owning and maintaining the built environment. It looks in detail at where interfaces take place and provides specific guidance on what designers should consider if the products when installed with each other and through each other, do in fact have compatible evidence of compliance.

It also introduces the long-overdue term **fire wall** to describe fire resistant walls in much the same way as fire doors, fire glass, and fire stopping. Using fire wall puts an emphasis that the wall is doing more than delineating space, it is there to protect people and property alongside a raft of other performance parameters that might be required.

This is a complex area because we have generally accepted that product A with evidence of performance will be acceptable if put together with product B with similar evidence of performance. And yet, the granularity of that evidence might preclude them from working as a system.

For example, with a compartment wall constructed from drylining, installed to the underside of a structural beam, there is a need to consider how that beam is protected from fire, how deflection is accommodated (to meet the guidance in Approved Document B), and how the requirements for service penetrations, fire stopping, acoustic performance and thermal insulation will be compromised unless further interventions are planned.

Starting at the design stage with a breakdown of identifying responsibilities, reporting, and communication lines using a Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) model it considers how to address the risk of leaving nominal details too late in the process and considering the individual as well as organisational competencies. The question set to establish a specification for fire walls asks designers to consider 34 points to ensure the supporting structure for doors and glazed openings can be delivered compliantly with compatible evidence that can be used at Gateway 2.

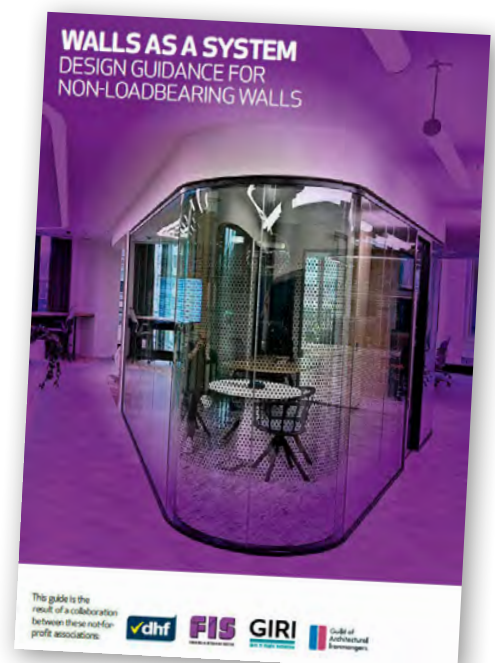
It includes up-to-date guidance on maintaining the compartment lines below raised access floors and above glazed fire walls with drop bulkheads, as well as addressing how the imposed load from the walls, glazing, and doors will be supported.

The Annex includes a list of all relevant standards and a list of further reading.

This guide was produced with the help and collaboration of technical experts and a wider group of peer reviews to help inform, and educate and clearly shows the sector coming together to provide clear relevant, and concise guidance in the same way as we did when the Firestopping of service penetrations guide<sup>1</sup> was published. In fact, this guide mirrors the

process and is linked to the RIBA Plan of Work (POW) and the Building Safety Act Gateways for Higher Risk Buildings and includes a checklist of considerations aligned to the POW, the key message being early engagement with manufacturers and contractors to ensure that what is designed can be compliantly delivered.

The guide is free and can be downloaded at: [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/best-practice-guides/walls-as-a-system](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/best-practice-guides/walls-as-a-system)



Source

1. [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/best-practice-guides/firestopping-of-service-penetrations](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/best-practice-guides/firestopping-of-service-penetrations)

## Skills



(L-R) Mayra Ortega Mon, Estaphanie Gonzaga and Belen Cadario

Images of Mayra Ortega Mon applying the mist coat and paint on site



# A SOLUTION TO SKILLS SHORTAGE: NUEVAS REINAS DE LONDRES

**Justin Devaney**, Operations Director at Platt & Reilly, shared a compelling story with **Beena Nana**, FIS Head of Skills and Training about an innovative strategy to address the skills shortage in the UK.



Beena Nana, FIS Head of Skills and Training

When speaking to Justin, he expressed his passion for our industry to address the skills shortage in the UK. He explained that

he believes that innovation is the key and that there is an untapped opportunity for a viable, sustainable workforce of currently underemployed people in the UK who could become valuable contributors to the industry if given the right opportunities.

Justin said: "I am currently working on a project in London, near Elephant and Castle, where there is a very high Latin American population but my research shows there are zero Latin American women within construction in the UK. This is the very definition of "Underemployment".

"As I was staying in South London, I visited an Ecuadorean restaurant in Elephant and Castle. In the very busy restaurant, I sat near three ladies **Mayra Ortega Mon, Belen Cadario,**

and **Estaphanie Gonzaga**. They told me about their various jobs as cleaners and some of their background. Mayra, originally from Guayaquil, Ecuador, was living in Spain during the financial crash. Determined to provide a better future for her young family, she courageously relocated to London to start anew in the UK. Belen, originally from Bolivia, has been living in London and working in various roles. She is looking for, and eager to take on, a new and challenging position. Estaphanie, also from Ecuador, has been working in the UK alongside Mayra and Belen.

"I could see from the discussion that they all had a strong work ethic and were fearless which would allow them to embrace new challenges and opportunities without hesitation. Their goals were always to work hard so they could elevate their family's lives.

"To my surprise, they were very interested in the project I was working on and wanted to know more about how to become spray painters applying mist coat on site, and what the training would entail including completing the NVQs in painting and decorating.



Justin Devaney, Operations Director at Platt & Reilly

"When other Latinas see how successful the girls are, they will be more likely to enter the world of construction, as they will see that it is receptive to everyone. I will always hire for attitude and train for ability.

"This coincidental meeting led to the employment of the three ladies by Platt & Reilly as Apprentice spray painters."

### The future is bright

Justin went on to explain that he has been extremely impressed with the ladies who have fitted into the business extremely well, their enthusiasm is refreshing and their work ethics are admirable.



**“The difficulty in receiving the right PPE is a demonstration that women’s needs in the sector can be an afterthought.”**

All three are now 75 percent through their Level 2 NVQ in Painting and will continue their continuous training and professional development (CPD) journey. This is an important part of the culture at Platt & Reilly, and they will soon be attending a three-day first aid course and moving on to the Leadership and Management course within the coming months.

With a smile, Justin said: “They are all now working on a 52-story tower in Canary Wharf. There was no point in starting small when you can go big. They have been immersed in one of the latest ongoing construction projects in London. Mayra is a naturally gifted mist coat painter. Although she is new to the discipline, her ability gives the impression that she has years of site painting experience. She is also a natural leader and very competent in her approach to work. Belen is a gifted painter—quiet, determined, and a fantastic asset to the team. Estaphanie has also proven to be very talented, working part-time at the moment, with a view to expanding her hours in the very near future.”

“There have been a few challenges along the way however, we have gone out of our way to ensure these have been resolved, an example is the sourcing of female Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE that is actually fit for women and not just the smallest man’s size.

Unfortunately, this is what the industry normally provides. It was important that if you are going to get the right people you need to get them the right PPE regardless of their shape and size. The difficulty in receiving the right PPE is a demonstration that women’s needs in the sector can be an afterthought.”

Commenting on their opportunities and roles, Mayra said: “It has been great to learn a trade and be given this opportunity, and we have all been pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome we’ve received from everyone at Platt & Reilly. Estaphanie added, “I was presented with the chance to learn something new, and I’m really glad I took it. I’m enjoying my role applying the mist coat and paint to the apartments, and this is a completely new environment for me.”

Justin explained that this is not the first time that Platt & Reilly has thought outside the box in an attempt to resolve the skills shortage challenges as he brought in his opinion the finest quantity surveyor from India to the UK, along with his wife and daughter. Justin explained that he worked with the gentleman in Mumbai for five years, and when he was leaving in 2017, it was too difficult to leave him behind and he is now a senior quantity surveyor in the UK. He said: “In my opinion,

he is probably one of the best, if not the best, in the country. There were various challenges along the way, from cultural adjustments to homesickness.”

### Conclusion

Justin concluded by saying: “This and similar experiences have taught me a very valuable lesson. When in recruitment scenarios I now always consider; the impact of moving a person from what is familiar to them and placing them in a completely unfamiliar environment, along with the emotional challenges this can bring. However, with support and respect, the positives can certainly outweigh the challenges and the underemployed people in the UK can continue to become valuable contributors to our industry.

“I do not doubt that Mayra, Belen, and Estaphanie will continue to work their way through the ranks of Platt & Reilly and will leave their signature on thousands of apartments in London. They are blazing a trail for Latinas within the UK construction industry.”

[www.plattreilly.com](http://www.plattreilly.com)



# FINISHES AND INTERIORS SECTOR (FIS) PROJECT REUSE - MAKING CIRCULARITY HAPPEN

**Flavie Lowres**, FIS Sustainability Champion along with some of the project partners, discuss why FIS Project Reuse will help address and aim to resolve the issues blocking a more systemic approach to product reuse in the fit-out sector.



Flavie Lowres,  
FIS Sustainability  
Champion

Recently, Overbury published a white paper on the upfront carbon of CAT B fit-out called - Counting the upfront carbon in CAT B office fit-out<sup>1</sup>. This study follows a review of data submitted to the

Net Zero Carbon Building Standard consortium, which identified a gap in the embodied carbon (and upfront carbon) data for fit-out projects. Offices are typically refitted every five to seven years (a study by the Financial Times suggests that the average office lease in London is just two years and ten months<sup>2</sup>).

The Overbury study showed that the upfront carbon of a CAT B fit-out is 190 kgCO<sub>2</sub>eq/m<sup>2</sup>.

If we follow the 2020 design target set by Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI), a new office building should achieve 600 kgCO<sub>2</sub>eq/m<sup>2</sup> - meaning that after only

20 years (or roughly 4 fit-outs), the carbon impact of those fit-outs is more than the carbon in the structure.

Reusing products back into commercial offices would not only help reduce the carbon impact of the projects, but it would also reduce resource use and waste.

Products, which are typically specified to last much longer than five to seven years, are often removed from buildings before reaching the end of their expected lifespan. Therefore, it is possible to envision that they could be repurposed for use in another building.

## FIS Project Reuse

Over the past two and a half years, FIS has been exploring with its members the possibility of reusing products in commercial buildings. Reducing carbon impact was identified as the primary driver for product reuse, while a lack of storage was noted as the major barrier to the circulation of these products.

While there are indeed many examples of products being reused, these instances are

often ad hoc—matching supply and demand in terms of timing, quantity, and quality can be quite complicated. To address this, FIS has launched Project Reuse, a crowdfunding project to pilot the use of storage solutions and assess whether it could facilitate greater reuse of construction products back into commercial projects.

The project will focus on two products: suspended ceiling systems and luminaires, and the storage facility is located in East London.

The project has 11 contributing partners - ISG, Overbury, Ambit, Space IS, BPC Interiors, tp bennett, SAS, Recolight, Reusefully, Lumybel and Blackstone Stripout. These partners are not only bringing the project to life but also contributing their expertise to overcome barriers. The project is now well underway: a project manager working alongside FIS has been appointed, and storage solutions have been identified.

Some of the partners shared their reasons for becoming involved and showed their continued support for the reuse agenda.

**Tim Phillipot**, General Manager for Central International Building at SAS said: "SAS products are ideal for reuse due to the resilience and adaptability of metal. Suspended ceilings make up 7% of a building's total embodied carbon but, when reused, can equal a carbon saving of 85% compared to new.

"SAS is a proud member of the FIS Circularity committee whose work aligns with our Sustainability Strategy structured on the verified Cradle to Cradle certified framework.

"Metal ceiling tiles are an ideal material for refurbishment as they are easy to disassemble, do not damage easily, and can be cleaned or

repainted with no waste. The FIS Project Reuse enables SAS to store valuable ceiling tiles that could be reused several times, over numerous decades. Although steel is already the most widely recycled material in the world, it now also has the potential to be the most reused material. With suitable maintenance and cleaning, a metal ceiling tile could refurbish multiple fit-outs or 60 years of a building's life cycle.

"We are pleased to collaborate with FIS and look forward to being part of the next circular economy chapter."

[www.sasintgroup.com](http://www.sasintgroup.com)

"This groundbreaking collaboration is so important because reuse of 'post-consumer' materials is only possible at scale if the whole built environment value chain makes it work," said **Peter Kelly**, Group Director of Sustainable Operations at ISG.

"This project aims to prove that architects, contractors, manufacturers, and reuse companies can work together to show that a more circular approach to construction is possible. This circularity brings benefits to all participants by showcasing to clients the art of

the possible, reducing the wastage of perfectly good materials, and lowering the embodied carbon of construction projects.

"ISG is proud to be a part of such a pivotal project and we look forward to publicising the outcomes that will encourage other companies to join us in making the reuse of construction materials the norm."

[www.isg ltd.com/uk/en](http://www.isg ltd.com/uk/en)

**Nigel Harvey**, CEO at Recolight explained that they are delighted to be a founding partner in this exciting initiative. Nigel said: "We all know that reused products have much lower embodied carbon, and much better resource efficiency.

"Providing temporary storage space for used but reusable light fittings, should make it far easier for organisations to donate a product/s without the urgent need to find a recipient. It should also help recipient organisations to obtain reusable product

when they need it. The new service will complement the Recolight Reuse Hub, a free to use online platform that links donors of useable product/s with potential recipients. We are hopeful that temporary storage will also begin to tackle the scourge of CAT A replacement projects, that are the cause of such large quantities of needless waste."

[www.recolight.co.uk](http://www.recolight.co.uk)

"There is no route to Net Zero for the fit-out sector or wider construction industry that doesn't include a very significant increase in levels of reuse of materials and products. While some areas of the sector, like furniture and Raised Access Floor (RAF), have been relatively successful in developing successful business models for reuse, the sector needs to do much more.

"This new FIS initiative is a great opportunity for the industry to come together and try and prove the viability for the reuse of other key materials used in the fit-out. We are excited to be a part of it and see what positive change we can help bring about," said **Joe Croft**, Head of Environmental and Sustainability at Overbury and Morgan Lovell.

[www.overbury.com](http://www.overbury.com)

**Paul Gaughan**, Director at Lumybel, said: "As an industry we create some beautiful spaces that rightfully make us proud however, the scale of resource consumption and waste generated within the commercial office sector has been a blight and the need to act was becoming obvious to everyone.

"This is why we are delighted to be involved in this cross-industry initiative to understand and resolve barriers blocking the development of a systematic approach to the reuse of product/s

in the fit-out world. This project is about understanding the practical issues that sites and the industry needs to overcome to tackle embodied carbon emissions and waste from the process, so it is essential that we get the voices and contribution of the industry so that we can make 'Reuse' a success together."

[www.lumybel.co.uk](http://www.lumybel.co.uk)

**Katherine Adams**, Director at Reusefully, said: "The carbon and environmental cost of buildings is enormous, and we need to do everything we can to reduce this by increasing resource efficiency, reducing waste, and providing buildings that leave a positive legacy for generations to come.

"In years gone by, buildings would act as material banks to be mined for new developments, however over the last sixty years or so a linear consumption model of take has superseded this, make, use, and dispose. Whilst there has been some progress in recent years in improving recycling rates, this is usually a downcycling of

resources, and a transition to a more genuinely circular economy revolves around a changing mindset, moving from linear use of resources to one where the value of products and materials are recognised and retained. This involves keeping products for longer i.e. through reuse. Finding effective ways to store and redistribute materials for reuse is vital if we are to realise our buildings as material banks, that's why we are involved in the FIS Project Reuse."

[www.reusefully.co.uk](http://www.reusefully.co.uk)

**Chris Webb**, Head of Sustainability at tp bennett, said: "As a large architecture and interior design practice, the materials we specify represent our greatest socio-environmental impact – and therefore, also, our greatest opportunity to achieve positive change.

"It is heartbreaking to so often see great-quality, great condition products – with all the environmental sacrifice and human endeavour embodied in them – being discarded, or, at best, downcycled; and with average office lease lengths continuing to shorten, this is becoming more prevalent than ever.

"The circular economy underpins the low-carbon, low-pollution, low-exploitation setting that we are trying to achieve. At tp bennett we are excited to be active backers of FIS Project Reuse and part of a great team of collaborators: An opportunity for manufacturers, suppliers, clients, contractors, colleagues, and competitors to come together to test, innovate, and demonstrate the viable future of construction material circularity."

[www.tpbennt.com](http://www.tpbennt.com)

If you would like to get involved or require more information about Project Reuse, visit:

[www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/sustainability/reuse](http://www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/sustainability/reuse) or email [reuse@thefis.org](mailto:reuse@thefis.org) or [flavielowres@thefis.org](mailto:flavielowres@thefis.org)



Source

1. [www.overbury.com/carbon-in-cat-b-fit-out](http://www.overbury.com/carbon-in-cat-b-fit-out)
2. [www.ft.com/content/5cc8ae2e-765c-43be-9f84-9426408e9609](http://www.ft.com/content/5cc8ae2e-765c-43be-9f84-9426408e9609)

# REFLECTING ON 21 YEARS OF SPACE

**Nick Bond**, Managing Director and founder of Space Interior Systems (Space), spoke to David Crowson, Editor, about his journey from an uncertain teenager to leading a thriving SME. As Space celebrates its 21st anniversary, Nick reflects on the challenges, lessons, and people who have shaped the company.



Nick Bond, Managing Director and founder of Space

Nick explained that his career started in a rather uninspiring way at 16. He spent a day with his uncle, a Quantity Surveyor (QS), and just sat in a car next to a building site. Nick said: "It wasn't the most exciting start, but it put me on the path."

After completing his A-levels, Nick joined Wiltshiers in Winchester and undertook a five-year RICS day release programme. Entering the industry during the late 1980s recession was tough, but it taught Nick resilience. "It wasn't easy, but those early challenges shaped my work ethic," he says.

In the mid-90s, Nick moved to ITS in Reading as a Projects and Commercial Manager. A supplier's raffle win took him to New York, where he met Miles Radburn. "Miles and I hit it off immediately. We both knew we wanted to start something of our own," Nick reflects. Their collaboration led to the creation of Office 1 Interiors, with their first project fitting out a school in Maidenhead.

## The birth of Space

After amicably parting ways with Miles, Nick founded Space in 2003 with the support of industry luminaries Mark Richards, Craig Foster, and Barry Smith from BW: Workplace Experts. "They played a huge role in getting Space off the ground," Nick acknowledges. "Their belief in what we were doing gave us the foundation we needed."

Ian Birnie joined Space as Contracts Manager early on. "Ian and I would start our days at dawn, coordinating on the phone, and often didn't stop until late into the night. It was all about proving ourselves in a tough industry," Nick recalls. This hard work laid the foundation for a company built on quality and reliability.

## Building a reputation

"Our first years were about surviving and proving we belonged," Nick reflects. "It took a toll on our personal lives, but we were a small fish in a big pond. I remember attending the AIS awards and thinking how incredible it would be to be recognised on that stage one day." That drive to be the best fuelled Nick's commitment to quality and consistency.

In 2005, Jon Cornwell, a long-time friend, joined Space and brought his engineering experience to the team, and we soon after diversified into Ministry of Defense (MOD) projects. "His work and relationships within the MOD recently helped us secure our first £10 million project and has set us on a new trajectory," Nick says.

Spencer Hammond joined in 2009 as one of our top ceiling and partition fixers, quickly demonstrating his leadership potential. "Over the years, he became my 'right hand man' in London, and his development has been a rewarding journey for me" Nick reflects. "Seeing him grow into the role of Director of London projects has reinforced the value of mentorship. Teaching him what I knew, only to see him excel beyond my own abilities, has been a deeply fulfilling experience."

## Lessons learned along the way

"If I've learned anything, it's that success doesn't come from a single moment it's about consistently showing up, working hard, and sticking to your principles," Nick reflects. "Quality has always been non-negotiable for us. From the start, we've been fair, honest, and transparent in all we do."

Nick emphasises the importance of trust. "You can't build a business without trust.

From day one, we have always paid our subcontractors weekly and suppliers before their due dates. It's how we built a strong, lasting relationship with our supply chain. People know they can count on us and vice versa, and that's invaluable."

Another lesson has been understanding the balance between growth and maintaining standards. "Our growth was never about ambition for expansion; it was about necessity. Every new hire was because we needed the support, not because we wanted to scale up. We've always focused on doing what we do better rather than just getting bigger."

Nick also learned the importance of adaptability in the construction industry. "We've faced all kinds of challenges, from economic downturns to changes in regulations. The key is to adapt without compromising on what matters most. Nick emphasises the importance of staying true to your values, no matter the external pressures. "In an industry where cutting corners can sometimes be tempting, we've always stuck to our principles. That's what's built our reputation, and it's something I'm incredibly proud of."

## Challenges, embracing change and innovation

Nick has seen significant changes in the industry, from improved health and safety standards to the rise of sustainability. "When I started, safety gear was almost optional. Now, it's a non-negotiable, and that's a good thing."

The COVID-19 pandemic brought its own challenges, but Space adapted. "We didn't furlough anyone, and we kept moving forward. We embraced technology in ways we hadn't before, and it paid off. When I started out, everything happened with a fax machine which was fairly painful, so I really appreciate how technology makes things so much easier."

"Sustainability has become a key focus for us. In the past two years, we've implemented new processes and published our first sustainability report. What once seemed like greenwashing has evolved, with the industry now demanding real evidence of change.

# PEOPLE IN BRIEF



(L-R) Jon Cornwell, Nick Bond and Spencer Hammond, winning the Project of the Year at the FIS Awards

We're actively involved in the FIS Reuse Pilot initiative<sup>1</sup>, which is pushing for genuine progress. It's invigorating to be at the forefront of these efforts, collaborating with significant companies to drive meaningful and measurable impact in our sector."

The construction industry is full of challenges, from navigating bankruptcies to managing contractual complexities. "But you learn to adapt," Nick says. "We've never won a project by being the cheapest, our clients come to us for quality and a good experience."

## Looking forward

As Space enters its third decade, Nick remains focused on maintaining the company's core values while adapting to an ever-changing industry. "We've built our reputation on quality, fairness, and strong relationships. Our growth has always come from people who trust us, which I'm incredibly proud of. The years roll by and as people move companies, they take you with them. A lot of our work at the moment is with ISG and we're so grateful for our relationships with people like Chris Anderson, who we previously worked with at BW: Workplace Experts for example."

Winning this year's Project of the Year at the FIS awards<sup>2</sup> on our first ISG project was a pinnacle moment for Nick. "I'm so proud of our team and the work we do, and it's great to have that recognised." Looking to the future, Nick is excited to continue empowering his team, embracing innovation, and upholding the standards that have made Space a trusted name in the industry.

[www.space-is.co.uk](http://www.space-is.co.uk)

Source

1. <https://tinyurl.com/3se88uv3>

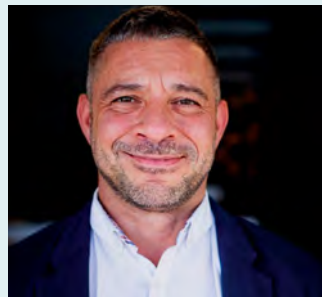
2. [www.thefis.org/project-library/hvn](http://www.thefis.org/project-library/hvn)



## Pacy & Wheatley promote David Booth to Director of Acoustics

Pacy & Wheatley announced that after working in their Acoustics division as the Commercial & Operations Manager for the last three years David Booth has been promoted to Director of Acoustics. Anthony Wheatley, Managing Director, said: "David's dedication, strategic vision, and leadership have been instrumental in driving the commercial operations forward and we are confident that his continued leadership and vision will drive our continued success."

[www.pacy-wheatley.co.uk](http://www.pacy-wheatley.co.uk)



## FGF appoints Andy Sykes as National Sales Director

FGF has recently appointed Andy Sykes as Sales Director. In his previous role as National Sales Manager for the business, Andy earned this promotion through his passion for the industry and dedication to helping customers find the right solutions for their projects.

Andy said: "Having this opportunity to lead a business with such a rich heritage is a real honour. Our people make this business, and we have a strong and brilliant team in place. We're implementing exciting changes that will immediately benefit our customers, starting with the addition of new talent to the team, which will bring valuable operational experience and support to our customers."

[www.fgflimited.co.uk](http://www.fgflimited.co.uk)

## BW: Workplace Experts announces trio of senior promotions

BW: Workplace Experts has promoted Kevin P'ng to Chief Commercial Officer, Rachel Tabone as its new Head of Talent and Culture, and Tom Hollingworth to Director of Technology. These strategic appointments follow exceptional growth over the last three years and enhance the leadership team as it pursues its goal to reach a turnover of £250M by 2025.

Kevin will oversee all commercial and legal operations, Rachel is responsible for developing a positive and engaging culture and Tom will feed into the business' aim to grow and leverage new technologies to make collaboration on projects simpler and more reliable.

[www.wearebw.com](http://www.wearebw.com)

## New business MD for SIG

SIG has announced the appointment of Howard Luft as Managing Director, SIG U.K. Interiors. Howard joins the business with extensive experience both on the supplier side and in the merchant sector, with his most recent role before SIG being CEO of Selco Builders Warehouse.

Speaking of the appointment, Gavin Slark, CEO of SIG plc, observed: "Howard's experience across both of our stakeholder constituencies will be a huge benefit to the business and I am personally delighted to welcome his drive, focus, and leadership skills which will help SIG drive forward."

Howard joins SIG from 1 October 2024.

[www.siginteriors.co.uk](http://www.siginteriors.co.uk)



Tom Hollingworth



Rachel Tabone



Kevin P'ng

Jeremy Hankinson

Tim Whitehill

Katie Smith

Matthias Kaulisch-Schneeweiss

Angela Mansell

Neil Fairhurst

Richard Coffey

Chris Sorensen

Zach Wallace

Iain McIlwee

# BUILDING THE NORTHERN POWERHOUSE WITH RESILIENT SUPPLY CHAINS IN THE FINISHES AND INTERIORS SECTOR

FIS gathered together a group of industry figures – a mix of specialisms, gender, ethnicity, and age – to discuss the legislative landscape, devolution, and their impact on work pipelines, procurement, and skills development.

## Participants

- Iain McIlwee**, Chief Executive at FIS (roundtable chair)
- Jeremy Hankinson**, Key Account Manager at PPG Architectural Coatings
- Matthias Kaulisch-Schneeweiss**, Sales Director at Hilti
- Tim Whitehill**, Chief Strategy Officer and Co-founder at Saible
- Angela Mansell**, Managing Director at Mansell Building Solutions
- Chris Sorensen**, Senior Project Manager at Overbury
- Neil Fairhurst**, Director at Cadman & Manpen
- Zach Wallace**, Divisional Commercial Manager at ISG
- Richard Coffey**, Managing Director at F & T Terrix
- Katie Smith**, Regional Manager at Hilti

## How the sector needs to evolve to capitalise

Many of the panellists expressed their concerns about the sector's struggle to capitalise on these opportunities due to poorly structured contracts and procurement processes.

One of the delegates suggested that this is because of mismanaged risk which creates a blame culture, undermining much of the positive work being done. Their specific concern was the increasing number of Contractor Designed Portions, which result in unclear responsibilities. The consensus was unanimous and some shared their experiences and that, while they believed public sector procurement is slightly better, it remains inconsistent and far from ideal.

"The culture of saying "Yes" during the tender process, with legal teams shifting risks down the supply chain, is particularly damaging," said one of the panellists. They all expressed their frustration that companies that price jobs accurately often lose

The opening discussion at the latest roundtable event held in Manchester in July began on an encouraging note, acknowledging that the local political debate has been more inspiring than the national conversation, with Metro Mayor Andy Burnham appearing to be genuinely fighting for the community and making a lot of sense explained **Iain McIlwee**, Chief Executive at FIS who also chaired the event.

Iain explained to the delegates that the Strategic Plan for Greater Manchester,

"Places for Everyone," aims to connect construction projects with community impact. There seemed to be a genuine recognition among them all that construction projects can deliver more than just buildings.

One example discussed was the New Carrington Plan, which will deliver 5,000 homes supported by a comprehensive and coordinated approach to infrastructure and community development.

contracts to others willing to underbid just to obtain the contract and then in the hope they can “make it work”. One participant mentioned that the Building Safety Act may have introduced some changes and there are positive signs, however, its impact remains to be seen. They said: “The importance of collective action, and a coordinated pushback against this culture is essential. Beyond the cost, contractual issues often arise under time pressure.”

“We all need to do more to be clearer on the requirements for efficient and effective preparation, leveraging technology and sharing information far more effectively to resolve decisions before arriving on-site.”

A point raised as another concern was the shortage of SME housebuilders. “This hampers target achievement and distorts supply chain dynamics. Addressing land allocation issues is crucial for providing these builders more opportunities,” one said.

Another one passionately said: “Fundamentally the juxtaposition remains that regulation is pushing for upfront work and the technology is available, yet cost and time constraints hinder progress, especially in refurbishment projects.”

### Modular construction, systemisation, and technological solutions

The conversation was opened by a panellist isolating the potential of modular construction, which is exemplified by its successful adoption in parts of Europe and Asia. The delegates discussed the need for systemisation to avoid the confusion of managing multiple complex packages and interfaces. One delegate commented: “We need to shift from talking about ‘Modern Methods of Construction’ (MMC) to simply ‘modular construction’ – techniques are not new but proven.”

“The efficiency observed in countries like Germany and Iceland, using systemised methods, even simple things like brick slips and spray plastering aren’t adequately considered during procurement. Decisions are too often made before the right conversations happen.”

“The disconnect between specification and tendering processes hinders early engagement with manufacturers, undermining design intent and the ability to modernise.”

“The limited impact of BIM in the UK compared to its effective use in Europe and the US is notable.”

“Effective procurement is essential to leverage these methods, and comprehensive project planning needs to improve. A project mindset is needed to get planning and resource allocation right from the beginning.”

A concluding observation was that: “Contractors always get asked ‘How much?’ and ‘When we can start?’, and seldom, ‘What additional information do I need to deliver?’”

### Design liability and contractual alignment

These comments emphasised that systemisation needs to start in the design process, which currently remains fragmented. “The Design Responsibility Matrix often gets sidelined, and contracts and the resultant process commonly misassigns design responsibilities,” said a panellist.

This led to a discussion on Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance. Several of the delegates agreed this is creating confusion, particularly around the responsibilities of individual contractors and the product/system manufacturers, as well as uncertainty about who is responsible and therefore insured for what.

One said: “In my experience, more contracts seem to be demanding PI and many companies are reluctant to obtain it and may not need it.”

A lot of this falls back on original design work and poor information at the tender stage.”

Another commented that, in their experience, letters of intent are to be avoided, they complicate early engagement and can result in missing vital details. Vague designs hinder on-site cohesion, and building safety and compliance costs are rising. To reduce the associated risks, better-defined design processes, especially during Stages Three and Four, are needed to help mitigate these risks.

### The impact of the Building Safety Act (BSA)

Several panellists acknowledged that the BSA addresses some concerns by intent however, agreed it has had limited impact in many areas. They identified numerous key issues including:

- Information gaps: Contracts are issued without meeting necessary information thresholds.
- Role confusion: Main contractors find an absence of a principal designer, relying instead on outdated CDM coordinators, leading to a “design and dump” problem.
- Expectations: There is a growing expectation under JCT for main contractors to assume principal design responsibility, necessitating early involvement and trust.
- Time constraints hinder progress.

One delegate commented, that there are, however, signs of improvement, such as earlier involvement in projects and more progressive discussions about how buildings will be maintained, but it is slow.

The discussion shifted to the importance of organisational capability, with several delegates advocating for streamlined processes that balance individual competence with team functionality. All agreed that more support is needed to help companies deliver and demonstrate this capability, and for clients to recognise it. →



### Payment and Project Bank Accounts (PBAs)

Iain posed an open question: "Can PBAs improve the payment process?" This led to a debate on how companies manage their working capital. One participant remarked, "Beyond the costs associated with multiple bank accounts, I have experienced resistance to PBAs, typically because I create an open-book project, and Tier two contractors have traditionally been resistant to disclosing Tier three payment details. However, I have addressed both of these issues by implementing new digital tools."

They continued by saying: "I have concerns about managing cash flow during the transition to PBAs, as well as the potential for PBAs to disrupt current practices if they are not universally adopted. Harmonising payment terms would be essential to address these issues. The reality is that construction firms very often "Rob Peter to pay Paul" in the current system. "If PBAs merely replicate existing financial flows, their effectiveness is limited, but facilitating confidence and deposit transitions could help to improve cash availability for projects."

Beyond the timing of payments, the lack of certainty regarding how much will be paid led to a discussion about the need to simplify the Construction Act. All participants agreed that the supply chain bears excessive risk and PBAs would help, but the "cure shouldn't kill you". The idea was mooted that protecting money in this way could help to re-examine how deposits should be deployed, if the employer can't deposit the required funds it could tell us all we need to know about the funding available for the project – working capital should be put to work!

"These behaviours have a detrimental effect on wellbeing which we all must address."

### How do we educate, and inform clients better?

The discussion returned to the importance of planning to support not just the building, but also its maintenance and lifecycle management. This means that design needs to inform improved information management, which will enhance project efficiency. More needs to be done to consistently communicate the need for these improvements to clients. This led to a discussion around competence within our sector.

One delegate commented that many experts advising clients lack the knowledge needed, leading to unresolved issues. They said: "We need to be training designers, clients, and their advisors too. Training often focuses on technical skills rather than project delivery, which is vital for success. We must break down the siloes."

### Recruitment, skills, and training

The discussion moved on to worker shortages, the gap between education and industry, and how the sector can reduce its reliance on migrant labour.

One panellist noted that the Northwest is notably underperforming in terms of apprenticeships, saying: "Selling lengthy apprenticeships is difficult; the training offered must be structured to maximise skill development efficiently. The qualifications

being offered lack flexibility and are fixated on traditional trades. In my opinion, we need to focus more on transferable skills, promoting adaptability in systems installation. The reality for many individuals is that they work with multiple systems throughout their careers.

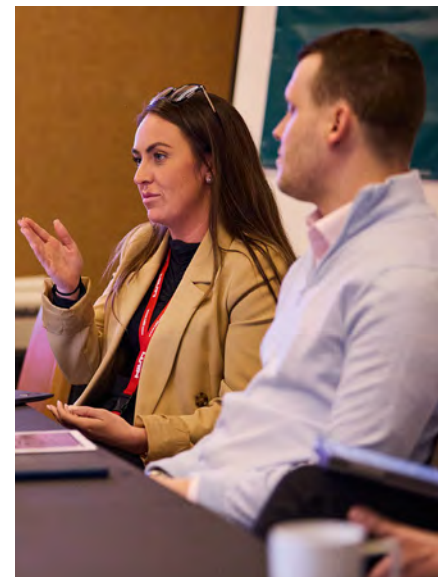
"We should also be looking at embedding core skills and ongoing training with employers and manufacturers. This approach aligns with modern construction methods, reducing the likelihood of on-site errors and developing systems that support more consistent installations."

Another panellist added: "Participants have opportunities to access funding for skills development in the Northwest. There is a misconception that this is only for green skills, but it can also support foundational training."

Concerns were raised among other participants about fragmented and overly complicated qualifications. The disconnect between training centres and actual site work was challenged, with one saying: "Students lack real skills despite completing courses. We need more on-site training provided by employers."

There was interest in exploring a more consistent approach to shared apprenticeships to help deliver training across projects, with the Wimpy programme referenced as an example of good historical practice.

**"We need to shift the focus to clear career paths and promotional opportunities to consistently embed the idea that construction is not a dead-end job, but one that offers immense potential."**





"Funding must reach those directly employing site workers, rather than being allocated from the top down without tangible benefits for the sector. The current tick-box, superficial, and overly prescriptive approach to social value doesn't do enough to support investment in people," another panellist remarked.

### Confronting reality in recruitment: Key insights

A delegate said: "The message is simple: construction offers lucrative opportunities. Many students are misled into prioritising university, accruing significant debt while often ending up in low-paying jobs. In our sector, the lack of a structured career programme means that 90% of industry entrants come through family connections.

"We need to shift the focus to clear career paths and promotional opportunities to consistently embed the idea that construction is not a dead-end job, but one that offers immense potential.

"There is also a need to align education with productive skills to address the decline of practical subjects. More should be done to explore the impact of AI on careers, as this will change the employment landscape, but it can't replace site workers."



All the panellists acknowledged how contingent work affects investment in training and the need for collaborative procurement processes to address this – it is a symptom of the issues discussed above.

Iain said: "The Manchester Plan offers a strategic framework for improving productivity and efficiency in procurement, and we need to be clear on how procurement can support this.

"Andy Burnham's new plan for Greater Manchester recognises the importance of construction and aims to provide viable alternatives to university, acknowledging that two-thirds of young people don't

pursue higher education. FIS is engaging with the Greater Manchester Authority to help ensure we make the most of this."

The discussion concluded with a recognition that the sector needs to increase workforce diversity, noting that many capable individuals are excluded due to the job's physical demands. The idea of a collective approach to Apprenticeships in the GMA Region was discussed and delegates felt it was worth exploring. Considering diversity too is key - adapting practices to include a broader range of potential workers is essential for delivering real change.

To read all the comments from the discussion in detail, go to:

[www.thefis.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Northern-Powerhouse.pdf](http://www.thefis.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Northern-Powerhouse.pdf)



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# THE EVOLUTION AND MODERN ADOPTION OF METAL MESH IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

We take a look at metal mesh, with its ancient roots, and why it is now a star in modern architecture and design, valued for its beauty, versatility, and functionality.

**M**etal mesh, a versatile and durable material, has a rich history dating back to ancient times. Initially, it was used in various utilitarian and protective applications. The earliest forms of metal mesh can be traced to chainmail armour, employed by ancient warriors for combat protection. This intricate, flexible metal fabric was made by interlinking individual metal rings to create a mesh that was both lightweight and strong.

In the Middle Ages, it evolved in its use, finding applications in architectural elements such as window grilles and gates, providing both security and ventilation. During the Industrial Revolution, advances in manufacturing techniques allowed for the mass production of metal mesh, which expanded its use in a variety of fields, including agriculture, mining and construction.

*Kelly Goldsmith, Head of Marketing at Amron Architectural*



**Kelly Goldsmith**, Head of Marketing at Amron Architectural, fast-forwards to the point where metal mesh is celebrated in contemporary architecture and design.

## Modern architectural and interior design

Over time, metal mesh has earned a reputation as a practical, durable yet surprisingly versatile product thanks in part to its uncanny ability to meet a wide range of specifications. With a variety of practical exterior applications including vent panels, cages, and baskets it is little wonder that metal mesh was eventually introduced to the world of interiors. Today, it is a material of choice for architects and designers aiming to create visually stunning and innovative spaces.

## Creative metal solutions

Designers often use metal mesh in creative applications, from intricate wall coverings to large-scale art installations, to ceiling features. Its flexibility and adaptability enable the creation of complex, flowing forms and patterns, making it a favoured material for artistic expression in modern interiors.

There are many types of metal meshes and metal sheets. These include expanded mesh, which is commonly used due to its excellent strength and air-flow properties. Woven mesh, although lighter in weight, is still a robust and durable mesh. Architectural drapery comes in the form of customisable chains, which can be used for unlimited applications. And, then you have metal sheets in the form of perforated, embossed, sculptural, and profiled, all of which can be manipulated into creating visually striking creations. New to the mesh offering, is mesh for glass, which allows for the usage of more delicate meshes in areas where they might never have been seen before, from splashbacks in kitchens, to feature walls.

## Inside and outside

Modern buildings often feature metal mesh facades, which serve both functional and decorative purposes. The mesh allows for natural ventilation and light filtration while providing an added layer of protection against the elements. Architects appreciate its ability to create dynamic, changing patterns of light and shadow, adding depth and texture to building exteriors.

*The Frederick Douglass Centre, at Newcastle University*



In interior design, metal mesh is commonly used to create partitions and screens that divide spaces without obstructing the flow of light and air. These applications are popular in commercial spaces such as offices and restaurants, where an open yet defined layout is desired. The transparency and semi-transparency of metal mesh offer privacy while maintaining a sense of openness.

Metal mesh panels when used in ceilings together with sound absorbing pads can enhance the acoustic quality of a space by reducing reverberation so reducing noise levels and creating a more comfortable auditory environment. This makes it ideal for use in large, open areas such as auditoriums and concert halls.

### Product in practice

Moreover, the durability of using decorative metal ensures that these design elements withstand the test of time. As a material known for its longevity and resistance to wear and tear, metal mesh has become an investment in both aesthetics and functionality. The sustainability of metal contributes to the creation of interior and exterior design that not only look impressive but also stand as enduring testaments to thoughtful design and resourcefulness.

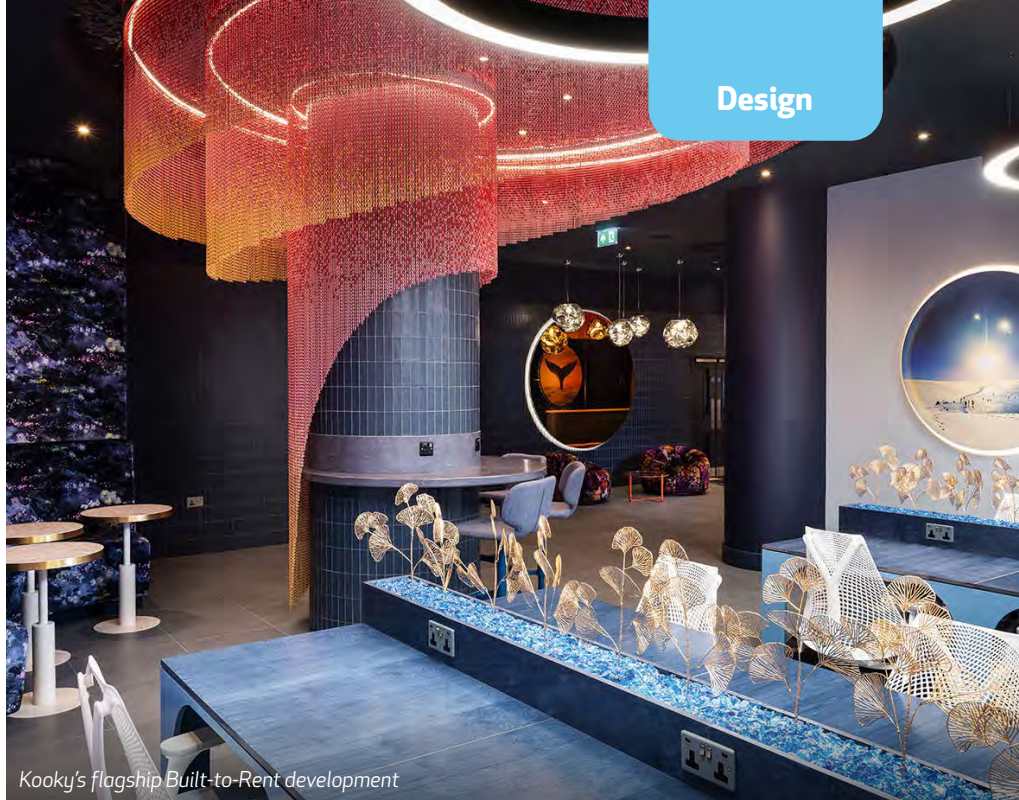
Striking examples include The Frederick Douglass Centre, at Newcastle University showcases how the use of expanded metal mesh creates a stunning visual effect on the building exterior.

The exterior of the 'Learning Arc' as described by the architects, Sheppard Robson, has a strong vertical expression formed of mesh panels, which allows for natural ventilation, and more solid elements of back-painted glass. A pattern has been created by changing the orientation of the mesh, varying the opacity of the material. This forms a rhythm to the facade which follows the structure of the building's concrete frame.

Additionally, Kooky's flagship Built-to-Rent development has been conceptualised as a journey through a dream, with each space representing a different facet of this narrative. The design captures the essence of an underwater world, where fluidity and distorted reflections mimic the motion of water. Architectural drapery in apricot and pink was used to enhance the soothing atmosphere, adding a touch of warmth and creativity.

### Sustainability and eco-friendly design

Metal mesh is typically made from recyclable materials such as stainless steel, aluminum, and copper, and its durability ensures a long lifespan, reducing the need for frequent replacements. Additionally, metal mesh facades can contribute to

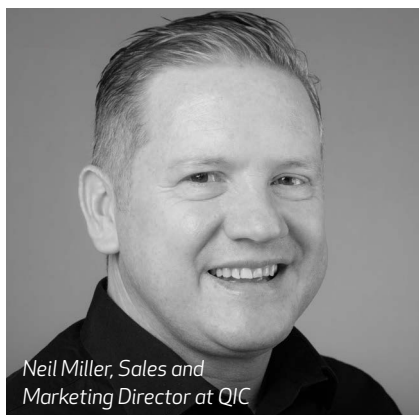


Kooky's flagship Built-to-Rent development

energy efficiency by providing shading and reducing the cooling load on buildings.

Kelly said: "In conclusion, architects and designers are driven by a desire for innovation and are turning this once-industrial material into a masterpiece. As we continue to explore the uncharted territories of design, metal mesh stands as a testament to the limitless possibilities that emerge when creativity meets functionality. It's time to embrace the artistry of metal mesh and let it weave its magic into the fabric of interior design."

[www.amronarchitectual.co.uk](http://www.amronarchitectual.co.uk)



Neil Miller, Sales and Marketing Director at QIC

### Metal mesh tiles: Gaining a sky-high reputation for creating stylish suspended ceilings

Neil Miller, Sales and Marketing Director at QIC, said: "As Kelly mentioned, designers often use metal mesh in creative applications, from intricate wall coverings to large-scale art installations and ceiling features. I will further explore metal mesh ceiling tiles, which have made a dramatic impact on the world of interior design.

"In contrast to the more conservative creative options offered by traditional fiber-

based products, metal mesh tiles can create statement suspended ceilings that, once seen, are never forgotten."

Neil explained that metal mesh tiles are typically composed of various metals, such as aluminum, stainless steel, or galvanised steel. This composition is integral to the sleek, contemporary aesthetic achieved by the tiles, which, due to their many perforations, maintain their appearance longer thanks to their durability and resistance to moisture and mold. In addition to adding a dynamic dimension to workspaces, the perforations in the mesh tiles allow light to reflect through, creating patterns that inspire an inviting productive commercial environment.

Metal mesh ceiling tiles, with their many perforations, are also an enabler to improved air circulation. This enhances occupant health and wellbeing by helping to regulate interior temperature throughout the year by allowing the structure of the building to act as a heat sink.

Sturdy as well as stylish, metal mesh ceiling tiles are more resilient than fibre-based products. They are less susceptible to breaking and cracking, reducing the need for future maintenance visits. This cost-effective outcome and its facilitation of a more comfortable indoor environment, enhance metal mesh's reputation as a sustainable ceiling tile option.

Despite the bold, open aesthetic they inspire, metal mesh ceiling systems can accommodate absorbing materials or acoustic backing to enhance their sound-dampening properties. Thus, schools, hospitals, and other public buildings can reap the benefits of a mesh ceiling without compromising to relevant regulation health and safety requirements.

For commercial interiors that work in terms of look, and feel and engender an all-round healthy environment, it might be a good idea to make a mesh of your ceiling.

[www.qic-trims.com](http://www.qic-trims.com)

# ALL FIRE-RESISTANT WALL TYPES ARE EQUAL, BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

Responsibility for testing internal glazing and doorsets in flexible supporting structures now lies with the manufacturer. **James Parlour**, FIS Technical and Vetting Manager, discusses the pitfalls and solutions.



James Parlour, FIS Technical and Vetting Manager

The newly published FIS guide 'Walls as a system'<sup>1</sup> highlights the importance of fire resistance having compatible and compliant test evidence between elements of

construction. One such case of this is where internal, non-loadbearing glazed partitions, doorsets, and windows are installed into an opening formed in a flexible supporting construction namely, drylined lightweight steel frame partitions. It is crucial to point out that whilst the drylining partition manufacturer should warrant that a specified flexible wall type wall can still perform to robustness standards with often large openings formed, they cannot test or underwrite the fire resistance performance of these openings.

This means that responsibility for testing internal glazing and doorsets into flexible supporting structures lies with the manufacturer of the supported element, i.e. the doorset or glazed partition manufacturer.

## What is a "standard flexible supporting construction"

The terms "supporting construction" comes from the EN fire testing standards, principally in the example of glazing and doorsets:

- **BS EN 1364-1** Fire resistance tests for non-loadbearing elements - Walls
- **BS EN 1634-1** Fire resistance and smoke control tests for door and shutter assemblies, openable windows, and elements of building hardware - Fire resistance test for door and shutter assemblies and openable windows
- **BS EN 1363-1** Fire resistance tests - General requirements

Both BS EN 1364-1 and BS EN 1634-1 refer to the general requirements in BS EN 1363-1 and state that when a test specimen is smaller than the test frame, a rigid or flexible standard supporting construction given in BS EN 1363-1 should be provided.

Flexible standard supporting constructions relate to lightweight steel framed drywall partitions and are specified in BS EN 1363-1 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Specifications for flexible construction

Intended fire resistance	Nominal steel stud depth (mm)			Gypsum boards type F, EN 520		Insulation: mineral wool	
	Group A	Group B	Group C	number of layers at each side	thickness of boards (mm)	Thickness (mm)	density (kg/m <sup>3</sup> )
EI 30	44 to 55	56 to 75	76 to 100	1	12.5	40 to 50	30 to 60
EI 60	44 to 55	56 to 75	76 to 100	2	12.5	40 to 50	30 to 60
EI 90	44 to 55	56 to 75	76 to 100	2	12.5	40 to 50	85 to 115
EI 120	62 to 70	71 to 75	76 to 100	1	15	60 to 70	85 to 115

The following commentary is also given:

- A result of a test undertaken with a construction in accordance with Group A covers studs in Groups A, B and C.
- A result of a test undertaken with a construction in accordance with Group B covers studs in Group B and C.
- A result of a test undertaken with a construction in accordance with group C covers studs in Group C only.

This gives a rationale for manufacturers to test their products into flexible supporting constructions using the most onerous configuration without having to test every possible permutation of stud, board thickness, number of boards, and type of insulation combined, then duplicate this for each manufacturer of drywall systems.

It is important to note however that if a test specimen is mounted in a non-standard supporting construction (also called an associated supporting construction), then the result will only be valid exactly as tested.

## Where are the pitfalls?

The rationale behind the EN testing methodology can fail to deliver its utility in several ways. First, if test evidence is gathered using the BS 476-22 methodology, the EN testing rationale does not apply and the manufacturer must evidence compatibility with a variety of wall configurations using another method.

Second, it is often unclear to designers and specifiers when a fire performing drywall specification is also a standard supporting construction as defined by BS EN 1363-1, and when these are not specified or are value engineered out of the wall types schedule, compatibility of test evidence can be compromised, for example by installing a type A plasterboard in lieu of a type F board.

Finally, it is often unavoidable to test elements in non-standard supporting constructions because standard supporting constructions either do not adequately describe common wall types required in the market, such as asymmetric or twin-frame configurations, or cannot accommodate significant weights of doors and glazing within the openings or carry detailing in the linings for the embedment of specified fixings.

## The solution

The solution to this issue lies in collaboration and early engagement. When drywall partitions are performing as a supporting construction, standard constructions detailed in BS EN 1363-1 should be specified whenever possible, and their removal from a specification through value engineering should be resisted unless the product manufacturer has demonstrated upfront that the systems have been tested together. Specifying one of these wall types adds considerable value to the design development process, as the likelihood of compatibility of evidence is higher.

Designers must also be mindful of the challenges related to the compatibility of evidence and must ask more detailed questions of the manufacturer regarding issues such as the construction of reveals, and any variations to the standard construction.

Similarly, manufacturers of glazing and doorsets need to present test evidence for their products so that it clearly communicates the variety of supporting structures that have been tested including whether they are standard constructions in accordance with the EN testing rationale.

Source

1. [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/best-practice-guides/walls-as-a-system](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/best-practice-guides/walls-as-a-system)

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# CAN THE UK GOVERNMENT OVERCOME CHALLENGES TO MEET ITS HOUSING TARGETS AND PLANNING REFORMS?

The highly accredited and charismatic **Dr Noble Francis**, Economics Director at the Construction Products Association (CPA), shares his thoughts and reflections on the new Government's housing targets and planning system.



Dr Noble Francis,  
Economics Director,  
Construction Products  
Association (CPA)

Noble explained to David Crowson, Editor, that when the Government announced that it was increasing its housing target from 300,000 to 370,000 homes per year and making it mandatory,

it caught his attention. Additionally, the Government proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and broader planning system in England, which are now open for consultation.

Following the announcement, much of the Government's focus has been on this new housing target and how it's distributed regionally. But there's more to the story. There are also some positive proposed changes to planning for infrastructure, including public service projects like schools, hospitals, and prisons, as well as private commercial and industrial developments, such as data centres and gigafactories. Additionally, there are proposed changes to planning for upward extensions, such as mansards, which could have a significant impact.

## A pragmatic view on the Government's house building targets

Noble said: "I can't help but point out that there's little chance of actually building 370,000 homes per year, even within five years. We're only expecting around 180,371 homes to be built in 2024/25, meaning house building would have to more than double to meet this target. The Government has also reiterated its ambitious goal of 1.5 million new homes over the next five years, but this too seems very unlikely.

"The key issues, however, remain: How will the demand for these homes be met if private house builders are expected to provide most of them? And where will the skills and capacity come from, even if the demand is there?"

"So far, the Government's proposals have focused primarily on easing planning

regulations, which addresses one problem but does not solve most of the house building challenges, especially for major house builders. That said, it's still early days for this new Government, and we might see demand-side measures introduced in the Autumn Budget, such as support for the private housing market and increased investment in social housing"

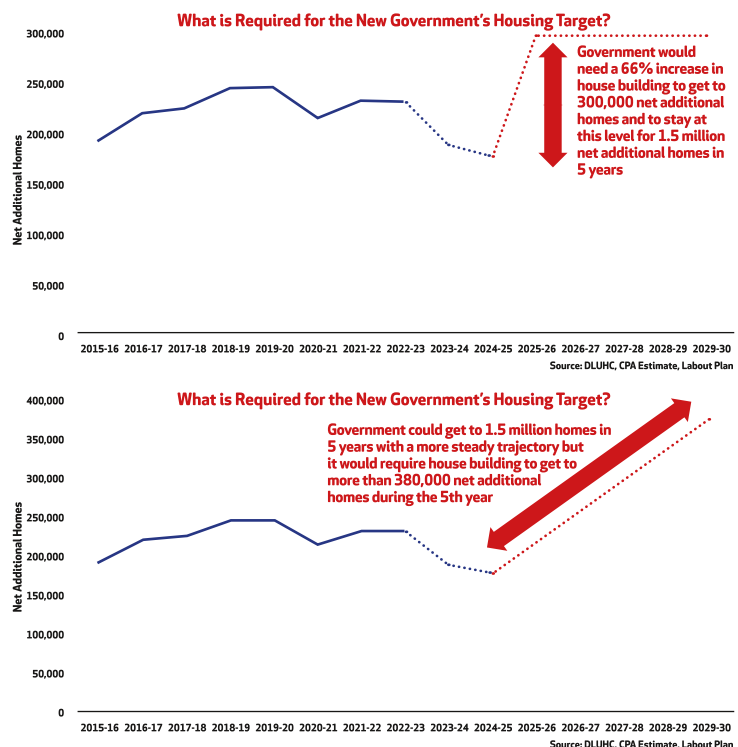
### Large house builders

He continued by saying: "When I have spoken with large house builders, they have indicated they are ready to build more if the demand is there. However, this would require lower mortgage rates and some Government policy stimulus to enable them to build with significant double-digit margins. But even though mortgage rates are expected to fall as interest rates are cut, the impact will likely be limited. Fixed-rate mortgage rates already account for anticipated rate cuts, so we won't see mortgage rates return to the historic lows of 2021. Back then, house building

benefitted from factors like the 'race for space', the Stamp Duty holiday, and Help to Buy. Given this, it's hard to see major builders contributing much more than they did in 2021. They're also unlikely to invest heavily in New Towns or green belt developments, as the Government's affordable housing requirements of 40% and 50% respectively make these projects financially unviable."

### Small house builders

Noble explained that planning has been a key problem for small house builders due to under-resourced planning departments and increasing difficulties with planning applications, which tend to favour larger builders. He said: "I believe that easing planning restrictions and providing more consistent planning resources would benefit small builders, whose business models rely on quickly constructing and selling homes to fund further projects. After being decimated by the last three recessions, small developers now account for only a small



percentage of house building. That said, on a positive note, this means there is substantial potential for growth if demand increases."

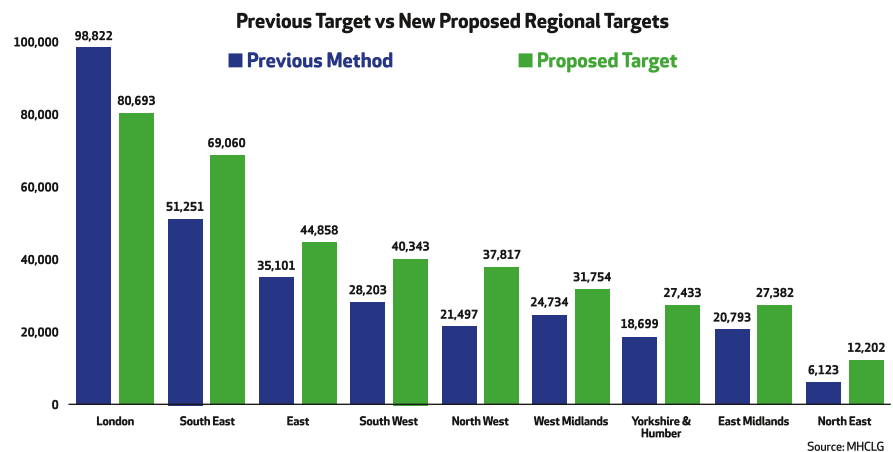
### Social housing

Noble went on to explain that social housing investment has been largely absent so far. Currently, 80% of house building is private, while the remaining 20% is primarily driven by housing associations and councils. However, this segment is still closely tied to the market through mechanisms like Section 106, shared ownership, or rents set at up to 80% of market rates. As a result, it remains dependent on the broader housing market, including factors like mortgage approvals, transactions, and house prices. The Government has stated that "an appropriate proportion of affordable housing should be Social Rent, subject to viability" and that it "expects many areas to prioritise Social Rent." However, without further clarity, this commitment carries little weight.

Noble continued by saying: "It's hard to envision house building rates rising anywhere near the levels the Government is aiming for by relying solely on private house builders, pressuring them to provide a higher percentage of affordable housing, and simply urging councils to permit more building.

"Much of the focus following the Government's announcements has been on the changes in regional housing targets. The new targets have been reduced in London and significantly increased in the North West and North East compared to the previous non-binding targets. This approach seems questionable, given that in London and the South East, housing is unaffordable because supply doesn't meet demand, while in other parts of England, housing is unaffordable for some due to low wages. However, it's worth noting that the target for London has been revised down from 99,000 to 80,000 homes per year. Even so, achieving 80,000 homes will require more than doubling delivery in the capital from pre-housing slowdown levels,

**"I can't help but point out that there's little chance of actually building 370,000 homes per year, even within five years. We're only expecting around 180,371 homes to be built in 2024/25, meaning house building would have to more than double to meet this target."**



making the new target more realistic (or at least less unrealistic). Conversely, increasing housing targets in areas where it is easier to obtain planning permission, such as the North, may help the Government get slightly closer to its overall targets – if the demand exists."

### Other key aspects of the NPPF proposals to consider

Noble explained that the previous Government updated the NPPF in 2023 to almost always permit 'considerate' mansard roof extensions. The new NPPF proposals expand this 'right to build upwards' to include other forms of extensions, allowing for the use of airspace above existing residential and commercial properties for new homes, provided they are consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene is well-designed. This includes compliance with any local design policies and standards, thereby removing the requirement for mansards to adhere to traditional styles. This could lead to a substantial increase in improvement work in an area that saw significant growth during the pandemic's 'race for space' but has since experienced a sharp decline.

He said: "Outside of housing, the Government has some potentially positive planning proposals. It will consult on setting criteria and identifying strategic sites for commercial development that meet the

needs of the economy, including locations suitable for laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight, and logistics. Additionally, it plans to include these developments in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) category, which should streamline the local planning process. This initiative aims to expedite these projects, which will be crucial for growth in the commercial and industrial sectors, as well as the wider UK economy."

Noble concluded by saying: "The Government is also proposing measures to ensure the faster delivery of public service infrastructure, including further education colleges, hospitals, and prisons. It suggests that local planning authorities should work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners, and statutory bodies to plan for these essential facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted. Additionally, the Government advocates placing significant weight on the importance of new, expanded, or upgraded public service infrastructure when evaluating development proposals. This should also help get projects such as schools, hospitals, and prisons through quicker, which also means that they are not going to be as expensive and have so many delays and cost overruns."

[www.constructionproducts.org.uk](http://www.constructionproducts.org.uk)

### FIS AGM and Conference

The FIS AGM and Conference: Reframing Construction, building a resilient industry, is being held on 7 November at the University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7SH (Scarman Building).

Many interesting topics will be discussed, including the political and economic backdrop, how we need to adapt to the new regulatory landscape, rethinking supply chains, and a postcard from the future.

Noble will be presenting at the event, discussing the prospects for the UK construction industry which will elaborate on the insights he has provided.

To find out more and register for the AGM and Conference visit: [www.thefis.org/project/fis-agm-and-members-meeting-7-nov](http://www.thefis.org/project/fis-agm-and-members-meeting-7-nov)

# 2024 FIS SCOTTISH AWARDS - THE WINNERS

The FIS Scottish Awards Lunch, held at the Voco Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow on 20 September, celebrated the outstanding projects completed by FIS members across Scotland, hosted by former footballer and Sky Sports pundit Chris Sutton.

## Comments from Judges Steve Neilson and James Parlour

"Once again, it was an absolute pleasure to visit and formally judge such a variety of projects in different sectors throughout Scotland. We were highly impressed by the quality of the projects submitted for consideration and thoroughly enjoyed meeting the member companies, clients, and architects involved.

"It was evident how much passion these companies have for their projects, teams, and organisations. The increased number of entrants and new members taking up the challenge of the awards enabled wider categories and Silver and Gold recognitions.

"All entrants should be very proud of what they and their teams have achieved in delivering such excellent work in demanding projects. It is always difficult to pick winners."

**"All entrants should be very proud of what they and their teams have achieved in delivering such excellent work in demanding projects. It is always difficult to pick winners."**

## Project of the Year sponsored by



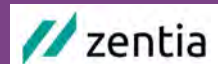
Winner - Roskel Contracts

Contract - Clarice Pears Building, University of Glasgow

Architect - Atkins

For more details on this amazing project see **Specialist Installation - Over £1m**

The headline Awards Lunch sponsor was



To read more about these amazing projects visit:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mwh4jmjv>



## Interior Fit-Out sponsored by



Gold Winner - Scotwood Interiors

Contract - Rabbie's Tours head office, Edinburgh

Architect - Form Design Consultants

Scotwood completed this CAT B fit-out project in 10 weeks. The 6,000 sq ft office space includes extensive glazing, with breathtaking views of Edinburgh old town and the castle and an extensive private roof terrace.

The programme involved the full fit-out of a recently completed CAT A fit-out - including M&E alterations, new glazed and drylined partitions to form meeting and breakout spaces, and bespoke joinery for a fully fitted kitchen, desking in open-plan offices and seating throughout.

**The judges said: "Scotwood expertly managed a group of subcontractors within a challenging programme and logistics environment to form a high-quality space that has dramatically improved the client's use of the premises."**

Silver Winner - WMR Contractors

Contract - Foyer refurbishment, Glasgow

WMR was commissioned to undertake the refurbishment of the communal foyer of this eight-storey, B-listed office building in Glasgow's city centre, with a brief to complement the building's heritage.

**The judges said: "This refurbished foyer made great use of marble flooring, wall cladding and stairs. A new recessed ceiling, feature wall and reception desk were executed immaculately. The restoration work on an original steel column enabled a historic centrepiece to shine, tying the scheme together to create a clean, welcoming environment that showcases the heritage of the property."**



## Specialist Installation - Under £1m sponsored by



**Gold Winner - Carter Ceilings**  
**Contract - Wallyford Learning Campus, East Lothian**  
**Architect - JM Architects**

Rosehill High School on the Wallyford Learning Campus provides a broad range of services to the local community: library and learning resource centre, leisure facilities, and multi-generational community and education spaces.

Carter Ceilings was contracted by Morrison Construction to supply and install suspended ceilings, acoustic wall panelling, acoustic ceiling baffles and timber wall panelling packages. Various plasterboard roof lights and perimeter margins within the corridors bordered coloured suspended ceilings throughout the building.

**The judges said: "The ceiling scheme comprised a vast number of suspended ceiling types, systems and colour variants and a variety of acoustic wall panelling and baffle types. Carter Ceilings delivered this scheme to an exceptionally high-quality finish and managed the technical challenge of the different installation methods with model competence management."**

**Silver Winner - Glasgow Ceilings**  
**Contract - Newmains and St Brigid's Community Hub, Lanarkshire**  
**Architect - BDP**

Newmains and St Brigid's Community Hub brings together Newmains Primary School, St Brigid's Primary School, a pre-school nursery and a range of community-focused facilities into a unified, sustainable campus.

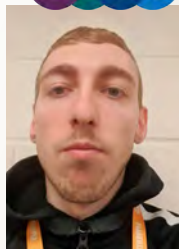
**The judges said: "The design of the central space demanded a fully bespoke approach to the ceilings. While standard ceiling solutions were used in the spur areas to great effect, the bulk of the ceilings were formed from a fully bespoke linear solution that enabled the large and impressive staggered central feature ceiling to meet specification."**

## Apprentice of the Year sponsored by



**Winner - Ethan Gandy, Ceiling Installer, Brian Hendry Interiors**

Ethan joined Brian Hendry as a ceiling installer last September at the age of 26, after spending several years in the retail and food sectors. Praised by colleagues for his "commitment to personal development and progression through unwavering dedication to his work and college education," Ethan is also highly regarded by the Glasgow Council work support programme overseeing him.



Having completed 12 training courses, Ethan has also been reviewing best practice guidelines for installation, maintenance, and access to suspended ceilings. His line manager says: "Ethan is as steady as a rock, effortlessly tackling any task assigned to him with determination. He not only focuses on his own responsibilities but also proactively seeks opportunities to assist others."

**The judges said: "Ethan did not follow the traditional route into construction, but he created opportunities to allow that pathway to open for him. Now he is becoming qualified, he is very much embracing his craft and going over and above - not just to learn his craft but to excel in it."**



FIS Scottish Awards

## Specialist Installation - Over £1m sponsored by



**Gold Winner - Roskel Contracts**  
**Contract - Clarice Pears Building, University of Glasgow**  
**Architect - Atkins**

Part of a £4.8m project, this large package included the supply and installation of bespoke joinery works and supporting SFS within the central atrium of the new Clarice Pears Institute of Health and Wellbeing building in the University of Glasgow's Western Campus.

It features acoustic infill panelling around the perimeters, forming bands and vertical arrangements on multiple floor levels, supported by designed Metsec SFS framing.

**The judges said: "The stunning central atrium constitutes multiple overlapping and cantilevered breakout areas lined by SFS and with bespoke joinery. Installation involved design challenges for the cantilevered SFS, logistical challenges around removing the scaffold, and enormously complex alignments and tolerances between independently supported elements within the open space."**

**Silver Winner - CCL Interiors**  
**Contract - Platform at Central Quay, Glasgow**  
**Architect - Keppie**

CCL Interiors installed all the plasterboard partitions, suspended ceilings, fire beam encasements and soffit linings to this award-winning build-to-rent scheme developed by Platform, and overseen by Graham Construction.

**The judges said: "This extensive drylining, ceilings, column and beam encasements package was expertly delivered by CCL. Complex sequencing, logistics and performance requirements were deftly managed by a highly competent site team, allowing drylined elements to be handed over on time, to a high standard, within the regulatory strictures of a modern residential high rise."**

## Lifetime Achievement Award

**Winner - Ian Young, Installation School Manager, Zentia**

An all-round nice person, Ian leaves no question unanswered, bestowing on all Installation School participants one-to-one attention and a wealth of industry knowledge. He is highly regarded and respected within the trade - a truly inspirational professional.



Ian has worked in the ceilings sector for more than 40 years, starting with Armstrong (now Zentia) in 1984. He has had many responsibilities, from regional sales manager for Scotland and the North East to his current role as manager of Zentia's Installation School - a position he initially took on in 2014.

Ian retired in 2020, but returned to maintain continuity of training at the Installation School - earning Zentia an FIS award for excellence in training in November 2023.

Ian organises and delivers the highest standards of training to a varied audience, from office-based internal staff to the most proficient ceiling supervisors. He has trained thousands of built environment professionals over the years.

# COLLATERAL WARRANTIES AND HOW THEY ARE EXECUTED

**Jonathan Bond**, Partner and **Alastair Dean**, Partner at DAC Beachcroft and FIS Legal Helpline Provider explain the intricacies of collateral warranties, exploring their purpose, implications, and the reasons we must approach them with caution.



Collateral warranties are in the news following the recent Supreme Court decision of *Abbey Healthcare (Mill Hill) Limited v Augusta 2008 LLP (formerly Simply Construct (UK) LLP)* [2024] UKSC 23. But before we get this landmark decision what is a collateral warranty?

A collateral warranty is a contract, that is associated with another contract (such as a construction contract, a sub-contract, or design consultant appointment), and is entered into between the person employed under the contract to provide works or services (the contractor, subcontractor or design consultant) and a third party who either has or acquires an interest in the project to which the contract relates.

## Why are collateral warranties used

In the context of a fit-out project to an existing building by a landlord the third

party would be a tenant where the tenant has repairing obligations under the terms of its lease. This means the tenant needs to be able to rely on the performance of the contractor, subcontractor, or a design consultant in the event any of their works or services are defective. So far so good but why is a collateral warranty needed?

A third party is not a party to the construction contract, the subcontract, or the design consultant appointment. In simple terms, only the parties to a contract can enforce the contract (i.e. the landlord and the contractor). Anyone who is not a party to a contract cannot rely on it. A collateral warranty solves this problem. Where a collateral warranty is provided to a third party (which would be the tenant in our example) it creates a contractual link between those responsible for designing and constructing the works (the contractor,

the subcontractor, or a design consultant) and the third party. Under the collateral warranty, the provider warrants to the beneficiary that it has complied and/or will comply, with the contract (construction contract, subcontract, or professional appointment, as the case may be). As a collateral warranty is a contract in its own right, this gives the third party the right to sue the provider of the warranty for breach of contract if the warrantor breaches the terms of the warranty. This is one of the key benefits of a collateral warranty for any third party and allows them to take steps to recover the costs of making good any defective works or services.

## What are the implications of a collateral warranty

In the *Abbey* case, the Supreme Court decided that a party who has the benefit of a collateral warranty does not have a statutory right to refer a claim to adjudication.

Adjudication was introduced by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the "Construction Act") which introduced a statutory right for parties to a construction contract to refer their disputes to adjudication. Contractors and subcontractors came to use adjudication to aid cash flow during a construction project, allowing them to swiftly (and relatively cheaply) enforce outstanding payments and continue the project. Employers too recognised the benefits in using adjudication, specifically to advance defects claims against contractors. The *Abbey* case is important as the third party was a tenant. The Supreme Court decided that a collateral warranty where the contractor is merely warranting its



performance of obligations owed to the employer under the construction contract, will not be an agreement “for” the carrying out of construction operations.

In practice, this means that most collateral warranties will no longer be considered to be construction contracts within the meaning of s104(1) of the Construction Act and adjudication will only be available as a remedy under a collateral warranty if adjudication provisions are specifically included in the collateral warranty. This is unlikely to happen in practice and so whilst a third party can still commence litigation for a breach of contract under a collateral warranty this decision brings much-needed certainty as to the standing of a collateral warranty.

### Why do we need to be more cautious if a contract is executed by deed when providing collateral warranties to a beneficiary?

As a collateral warranty is a contract it can be executed as a deed (this is when a deed is signed by the parties involved in a way that shows they intend to be bound by its terms) or under hand. Construction agreements have traditionally been executed under hand (often referred to as a simple contract). There is increased prevalence of contracts requiring execution by deed which impacts on how a collateral warranty is then expected to be executed. One of the key differences between execution as a simple contract or as a deed is that the limitation under a simple contract is six years whereas limitation under a deed is 12 years.

Contracts executed by deed tend to involve higher stakes and commitments, potentially altering the risk profile of a member's activities.

Removal of “consideration” is worth dwelling on for specialists signing a deed which could mean agreeing to something that a Court (if making a judgement on a contract under hand) may otherwise deem unreasonable. Examples of this could be assuming responsibility for broad terms like “compliance with all regulations”, and the performance of

products whilst leaving less opportunity to use “reasonable care and attention” as a defence in the event of a dispute.

### Insurance implications

If offered a deed, you should review your insurance policies to ensure that the execution of deeds is covered. Deeds might entail different liabilities compared to standard contracts, and insurers may need to be aware of these to adjust coverage appropriately.

To avoid any gaps in liability protection and to ensure compliance with insurance terms, it is advisable for to inform your insurers when entering into contracts by way of best practice. The insurer may offer a contract review service or a collateral warranty review service to ensure that the professional indemnity insurance policy will respond to any claim under the collateral

warranty. Regardless it is advisable to get a deed carefully reviewed to ensure you don't inadvertently extend your liability.

### Conclusion

In the case of a deed, greater caution is required as this typically introduces additional formalities and extends enforceability and limitations. You should review contracts carefully and consider them in line with insurance policies held. It is recommended you consult with your insurers to ensure appropriate coverage and risk management when engaging in transactions requiring deeds. This proactive approach will help safeguard against potential liabilities and ensure compliance with insurance requirements.

[www.dacbeachcroft.com/en](http://www.dacbeachcroft.com/en)



## FIS Legal Helpline

FIS has partnered with three legal advisors DAC Beachcroft, Hill Dickinson, and Anderson Strathern to offer its members a telephone helpline service.

Subject to carrying out conflict checks and there being no conflict of interest, the legal advisors will provide a pro bono helpline service of up to two telephone calls, of no more than 40 minutes in duration (in total across the two calls), on any one legal issue (limited to 20 mins if Anderson Strathern is chosen partner). Any further advice is at the discretion of the legal advisor and may (within the provisions of this agreement) require additional charges to be imposed on the Member.

Should an appropriate advisor not be available at the time of the original phone call, the legal advisors will offer a guaranteed call back within 24 hours.

To learn more about the FIS Legal Helpline visit: [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/legal-helpline](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/legal-helpline)

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Cast Corridor 1, RA Schools, 2024. credit David Parry

## Royal Academy of Arts schools

Artisan Plastercraft is celebrating the completion of its double contribution to the Royal Academy of Arts Schools renovation project.

Founded in 1769, the Royal Academy Schools, based in the heart of the Royal Academy of Arts, is a Grade II listed building in London's Piccadilly and is the country's oldest art school. The brief given to Artisan Plastercraft was to provide lime plaster restoration to masonry, covering walls and ceilings, including barrel vault ceilings, as well as high-quality decorated finishing through the Artisan Painting & Decorating side of the business. Among the work carried out was the decoration of walls, ceilings, floors, skirting, joinery and woodwork – including window frames and fittings, architraves, dado, and balustrades, taking care to preserve several areas of historic interest.

Main contractor Knight Harwood completed the restoration and renewal project designed in collaboration with David Chipperfield Architects and Julian Harrap Architects. It aims to introduce modernised facilities while preserving the historic fabric of the buildings. This includes expanded studio spaces, new technical workshops, a library, and a student canteen.

The scheme also involved restoration of historic studios and the installation of around 150 historic casts and artworks in newly curated displays.

[www.artisanplastercraft.com](http://www.artisanplastercraft.com)

## Hermione Neale appointed as Marketing Apprentice at FIS

The Finishes and Interiors Sector (FIS) is delighted to announce the appointment of Hermione Neale as Marketing Apprentice.

Hermione explained that she previously worked at McDonald's while completing a two-year Business course and a year of Art & Design at Heart of Worcestershire College. She was delighted to achieve an Extended Diploma in Business and a Foundation Diploma in Art & Design and applied for the role of Marketing Apprentice at FIS because of the progressive nature of apprenticeships and the on-the-job learning opportunities that FIS provides.

She said: "I am very excited to join the team and develop my skills and knowledge while working alongside new and hardworking individuals. Everyone has been so welcoming and informative about my new role, which has made me feel very comfortable in this new working environment. I look forward to supporting and meeting you all, as well as seeing where

my role takes me and learning more about the Finishes and Interiors sector."

Commenting on the new appointment, FIS Events & Comms Manager, Clair Mooney, said: "Hermione's enthusiasm and commitment to learning were evident during our recruitment process. We were delighted that she accepted our offer to join the team. As part of the marketing team, Hermione will play a pivotal role in driving forward the association's marketing objectives."

Commenting on the apprenticeship recruitment process, FIS Operations Director, Jane Knight, added: "This is our first apprentice, and so far, we have found the process relatively straightforward, with our training provider doing much of the work. We were pleasantly surprised by the quality of the applicants we interviewed and ended up with a shortlist of three excellent candidates. We chose Hermione because her enthusiasm, desire to learn, and strong work ethic are a perfect fit for FIS."

## A notable visit

Stanmore Contractors had the privilege of welcoming the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, and Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, to Oval Village by Berkeley [www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/developments/london/oval/oval-village](http://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/developments/london/oval/oval-village). During the visit, they spoke with the apprentices, among other things, discussing their journeys into the industry and their prospects. This notable visit underscores the importance of nurturing young talent in our industry.

[www.stanmore.co.uk](http://www.stanmore.co.uk)



(Centre) Rachel Reeves and Angela Rayner being shown around the Oval Village by Berkeley

For further information or any questions please contact FIS at [info@thefis.org](mailto:info@thefis.org) or call **0121 707 0077**



Hermione Neale, Marketing Apprentice at FIS

## 'Living lab' created for tomorrow's sustainability engineers

The New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering's (NMITE) Skylon campus<sup>1</sup> is unique for many reasons.

It is a higher-education provider that has been created from the ground up by its founders, teachers, donors, and a cohort of young designers. Its goal is to give young people a path to becoming integrated engineers who are 'sustainability conscious' and ready to find solutions for achieving net zero.

NMITE needed a campus that facilitated its unconventional style of teaching and reflected the aspirations of the institution. Sustainability was an important goal, as was using biophilic design used to increase the building occupants' sense of connection to the natural environment.

As well as making the campus itself an object for students to learn more about timber construction, NMITE wanted the site to be a 'living lab'. Sensors would be used to monitor the campus' structural, acoustic, and thermal performance, with the intention of sharing this data with the industry to develop insights.

This meant creating a building that was as high performing as it was experimental.

### Educational panel

Knauf Insulation's products were used for the pre-fabricated panels supplied for the construction of the building. Taylor Lane built 20 panels using a selection of non-standard materials and techniques specified by NMITE to demonstrate different approaches to students.

Although each panel was unique, they all had a 240mm cavity that was insulated with OmniFit® Slab 35.

To read the case study in full visit: [www.specfinish.co.uk/living-lab-created-for-tomorrows-sustainability-engineers](http://www.specfinish.co.uk/living-lab-created-for-tomorrows-sustainability-engineers)

[www.knaufinsulation.co.uk](http://www.knaufinsulation.co.uk)

Source

1. [www.nmite.ac.uk](http://www.nmite.ac.uk)



The New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering's Skylon campus

## Girls Can Build programme inspires over 700 school girls in eight weeks

An initiative aimed at inspiring primary school girls to explore careers in construction has achieved remarkable success, with approximately 727 Key Stage (KS) Two girls participating in just eight weeks.

Spearheaded by the talented women at OCL

Facades they meticulously curated and developed engaging, hands-on sessions exclusively for schoolgirls aged seven to eleven.

The programme, which started in May, involved six primary schools across Basildon. Over the course, 13 sessions were conducted, including assemblies and classroom activities. Girls in years three to six had the opportunity to wear hard hats and hi-vis vests as they took on roles such as project managers, leading a bridge-building challenge. They also participated in PPE challenges, job role activities, and interactive Q&A sessions with the OCL team.

This initiative not only highlights the possibilities within the construction industry but also aims to plant the seeds of curiosity and ambition in young girls, paving the way for a more diverse future in the field.



Pupils proudly displaying their certificates of achievement

The programme has been shortlisted in the Outreach Initiative of the Year category at the CN Workforce Awards 2024

[www.ocl.london](http://www.ocl.london)

## Updated Drylining Specifiers' guide launched

The Finishes and Interiors Sector (FIS) has published a revised and updated Specifiers' Guide to Drylining. This essential resource will help specifiers and designers with the specification of drylining, and to take account of new working practices, the Building Safety Act, and sustainability.

First published in 2022, this revised guide is an invaluable aid to specifiers, designers, installers, and clients. This publication will guide them through some of the key criteria that should be considered when writing a specification for drylining, including partitions, wall linings, and shaft walls. In helping to select a drylining system that will satisfy performance needs, it also includes descriptions of other non-plasterboard, such as calcium silicate board, which is also used in drylined systems. The guide includes top tips when specifying drylining, as well as reference material on regulations for safety, fire performance, and standards.

Divided into sections, the revised guide covers everything from writing a specification to performance and material characteristics, as well as installation and inspection. It offers a series of considerations for specifying all types of drywall and provides updated and revised information, including the addition of Building Safety Act duty holder requirements, updated details on individual, organizational, and functional competence management, the inclusion of the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI), and the removal of BS 8212.



To download the guide visit: [www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/specifiers-guides/](http://www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/specifiers-guides/)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Industry Day: Commercial Fit-Out

Hill Dickinson LLP, London  
15 October

### FIS Conference and AGM

University of Warwick, Coventry  
7 November

### FIS Training Awards Lunch

Plasterers Hall, London  
5 December

### FIS Conference at Workspace Design Show

Business Design Centre, London  
25-26 February 2025

For further information of these events visit: [www.thefis.org/events](http://www.thefis.org/events)



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