Mæ's Social & Environmental Impact Report 2025-26

June 2026

Mæ

We are Mæ

Our purpose is to design buildings and places that uplift the human spirit. Founded by Alex Ely, Mæ is a Stirling Prize winning practice at the forefront of sustainable, resilient and socially conscious architecture and urbanism; creating work that exists in harmony with the planet and enriches culture and society.

We thrive on collaboration. Working on regeneration projects for public and private sector clients, we talk – and listen – to colleagues and communities. Our design solutions match the client's brief with the varied day-to-day needs of the building's users.

Focusing on brown-field sites, we promote green policies. We've designed the UK's largest new-build Passivhaus scheme and each new project reinforces our environmental credentials. At Mæ, we blend creativity, humanity and sustainability. We see the big picture. To us, place making is a vital part of the process. Working in the housing, urban design, health & care, social infrastructure sectors, we design at all scales. From the city to the living room, we apply integrated thinking.

Our mission is to uplift the human spirit for the long-term and our work is guided by the following three principles:

Social

We create inclusive, welcoming places together with the people who use our buildings. We continue to create architecture that is socially responsible and benefits the communities it serves. We ensure that projects are accessible, inclusive, and provide equitable opportunities for all members of the community.

Sustainable

We respond positively to the climate emergency, designing resilient, low-carbon buildings. Mæ prioritise sustainability and environmental stewardship in all of our projects. This includes implementing measures to reduce carbon emissions, minimise waste, and promote biodiversity. Mæ strives to use materials and methods that are sustainable and have a low impact on the environment.

Spatial

We go beyond conventional thinking to make imaginative, affordable spaces that exceed people's expectations. We prioritise design excellence in all of its work. This means striving for innovation, creativity, and excellence in design and construction, while also considering the needs and goals of the community and the environment. Mæ aims to create spaces that are beautiful, functional, and sustainable, and that will leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

To deliver on our mission, our practice is made of up three studio teams:

Mæ B

Growing as a business that profits with purpose and as a shared business; building social value & social capital for our clients and the communities we serve, and as a B-Corp® certified company, balancing profit with people and the planet.

Mæ Zero

Creating exemplary, pioneering circular and environmental buildings. Each new project aims to develop learning and build research and know-how in order to propel us forward in this goal.

Mæ +

Continuing to be the industry leader for low-cost and high-quality housing; developing the DNA genetic sequence for good housing, using research, POE data and automation we intelligently plan and test our buildings.

We have been a Certified B Corporation® since 2024.

As a company, we support our community by using local suppliers and services (hopefully also B Corp® companies). We have processes in place to not only assess the quality of our supply chain but also their social and environmental ethos, ensuring they align with ours.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about our B Corp journey, please contact Denise Heseltine at Mæ - d.heseltine@mae.co.uk

We have made a commitment to change our suppliers and collaborators to ensure a more local spend, using independent diverse companies we can build long-term relationships with and recommend across the industry.

We work in both public and private sectors focusing on delivering social and affordable housing, community infrastructure and urban planning. We are currently working in many London boroughs including Newham, Camden, Barking & Dagenham, Southwark and Hammersmith & Fulham. Our public sector and housing association projects in 2024-25 made up 75% of our turnover and enabled us to deliver work within our neighbouring London boroughs, as well new neighbourhood planning projects in Manchester and Hampshire.

We seek to actively support clients who are aligned with our principles. To this end, we will prioritise clients who want to help create a more equitable and sustainable society; clients and collaborators who share our values and mission. This will ensure that we are working towards common goals and that everyone is committed to making a positive impact.

We will, prior to accepting commissions, consider environmental impact, provenance of finance, destination of profits, human rights record and social value. We undertake Post Occupancy Evaluations (prioritising environmental and social impact) on our projects and ask for stage and end of project feedback reviews from our clients. Each year, we allocate a minimum of 10% of our annual profits to support industry diversity initiatives and social value community programmes.

The following Social and Environment Impact Report summarises Mæ - both our achievements over the last year and our objectives for the next 12 months. The report is structured as follows:

Our people and our culture: wellbeing and employee stakeholder engagement, and our B Corp continued improvement plan for 2024-27

Community social impact: the social value, JEDI initiatives delivered by our team within the communities we work; and community stakeholder engagement through consultation and co-production

Collective action: contributing to change within the built environment industry through collaboration and research.

Projects, people, planet: how we embed our climate challenge objectives and our social impact and wellbeing principles in every project we do; and how our customer stakeholder engagement through post-occupancy evaluations creates positive change for the future

Our company and our planet: our objectives as we work towards small business net zero.

Our B Corp Continued Improvement Plan team workshop 2025, held at Sands End Arts & Community Centre

Our people and our culture

Our people

From day one our recruitment and induction procedures ensure that our team of excellent people are aligned with and adhere to our Code of Ethics. They choose us as much as we choose them and that enables us to build an inspiring, strong and skilled team for the long-term.

Everyone joins a studio team to suit their interests and skills, and they set and deliver on our social, sustainable and spatial objectives. They feed these outputs into our projects and share knowledge and experience across the wider practice. We are architects but we are also researchers, innovators and teachers, and crucially we live in the local communities we work. We are building homes and creating places for our neighbours.

We work with a number of industry diversity champions – The Architecture Foundation, Open City, Paradigm Network, Preach, Blueprint for All – through our practice and project social value programmes. We are playing our part in contributing to changing representation within the built environment. All our people participate in our education, employment and community social value and diversity initiatives, as well as using our volunteer scheme to share their skills.

As well as our people, we also regularly welcome interns and work placement students, and our team teach undergraduate & postgraduate architecture, mentor and share knowledge through talks and workshops. We are accredited with the Living Wage Foundation.

We are also Good Work Standard accredited, recognising our commitment to being a fair and inclusive employer.

Our company is 60% women and our senior team of directors and associates is 75% women. Our practice is 20% Black and Asian, which although above industry average, is below the London average and we are focused on improving our representation.

Our Mæ B team lead on our diversity initiatives, recommending changes to policies and industry programmes. They also manage our Mæ Forum and mentoring programme, organise our social schedule, provide mental health support (alongside our Employees Assistance Programme) We have recently published our own wellbeing toolkit for all our employees, and hosted our first Wellbeing Week in February 2026.

Our B Corp Continued Improvement Plan team workshop 2025

The Good Work Standard is an accreditation programme that provides employers with a set of best employment practices alongside information and resources to help achieve them.

The initiative has been developed in collaboration with London's employers, trade unions, professional bodies and experts and it sets the benchmark the Mayor wants every London employer to work towards and achieve. Organisations able to meet the Good Work Standard criteria can apply for accreditation and recognition as leading employers from the Mayor.

The Mayor's Good Work Standard aims to improve working lives for Londoners by bringing together best employment practice and links to resources and support from across London to help employers improve their organisations.

The Good Work Standard is organised into four key areas, known as pillars, that are relevant and important to all employers and set the benchmark for good work.

Involving employees in decision making and managing change and positive engagement with trade unions where possible cuts across all pillars of the Good Work Standard.

The four pillars of Good Work are: fair pay and conditions, engagement, voice and wellbeing, skills and progression, and diversity and inclusive recruitment.

www.london.gov.uk

Our B Corp Continued Improvement Plan

Focused on the new Impact Topics 2025 and how we can improve over the next 2 years, so we reach the highest standards we can in 2027.

Our **Mæ Zero** team are currently working on Connected Neighbourhoods Toolkit. This supportive publication is a structured, scalable framework for understanding how neighbourhoods' function—and how they can be strengthened. It will help social housing providers, local authorities, and communities identify where place-based interventions are most needed and how to deliver regeneration that works over the long term.

Customer feedback is essential to any service or product that a company provides. Through our B Corp journey, we have been reviewing and planning the best way we gain that feedback. Our **Mæ B** team have therefore been developing our Post Occupancy Evaluation standards.

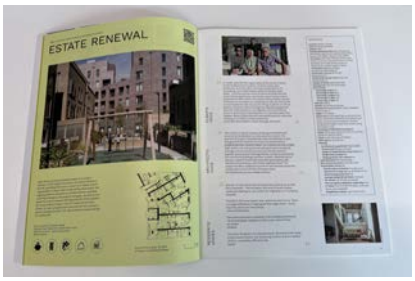
Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is the process of obtaining feedback on a building's performance in use after it has been built and occupied. POE collects information on building and energy use and user satisfaction.

Our Mæ B team (The B is for B Corp) planning the next 2 years of workplace culture improvements, JEDI and Human Rights initiatives

Our Mæ Zero team focusing on Climate Action and Circularity & Environmental Stewardship

During 2025-2026 we will be visiting our recent projects to meet with residents, users, and client to hear first-hand what is liked, what is not working so well, etc. This information is then reported and published and communicated back to the design teams.

The **Mæ+** team are heading up our approach to government affairs and collective action. Mæ are founding members of both the London Practice Forum and Architects' Action for Affordable Housing (AA4AH) collectives, and we will continue to collaborate with our peers to ensure we contribute to change in the industry and therefore change to people's lives - through affordable housing, better employment, social impact and wellbeing, and the long-term protection of our planet for future generations.



The 'Good Homes for All' guide was published this year, and we will continue to demand that our current government 'does better' in delivering affordable housing for all, particularly considering the Spending Review announcement in 2025 and the subsequent investment in UK housing over the next 10 years.

Mæ B are our workplace culture champions and are continuing the review and improve our mentoring programme and appraisal processes. They are delivering on our training requirements and ensuring that our employee-led Mæ Forum engage in practice decision-making.

B Corp Impact Topics for our 2027 recertification

The team are focusing on working with two diversity-focused industry initiatives - Preach Inclusions and Blueprint for All - in 2025 and 2026, with linked diversity and social value programmes, and JEDI training for our team.

Although we have been coordinating and delivering community, education and employment programmes for over 10 years, our recent introduction of paid volunteer days for our team has been a very popular with our team, with a broad range of charitable and skills contributions.

We review, discuss and action our environmental goals, as this is key to ensuring we are living up to our intentions. Our objectives are managed by our sustainability team, Mæ Zero team.

Our current objectives - such as technical design and performance, who life carbon assessments, a fabric first approach to design, carbon measuring materials, processes, etc. - are communicated to all colleagues, and we welcome input in their evolution to make sure all colleagues are engaged and active in their implementation.

Our Mæ + studio team are leading the practice on government affairs and collective action

Mæ Zero also undertake the management of our Environmental Management System and Greenhouse Gas measuring and reporting. We care currently on target to meet another 10% reduction in our GHG 'tonnes' across all three scopes. All of which will continue to be offset with carbon credits until we reach net zero status.

Strong leadership

Our practice directors are also leading on more positive changes within the company. Following on from B Corp CIP engagement workshop, we are developing ideas from our team and best they can be implemented in the company for the long-term. Employee diversity was an important topic, and we have reviewed and changed our recruitment policy. We now advertise roles through diversity-led industry initiatives and reach out to a broader range of universities.

Our biggest change in 2024-2025 has been the overwhelming success of employing our first Level 7 apprentice. As a small practice this was a big commitment, financially. But we needed to play our part in making the industry for inclusive, and it has been a wonderful experience for everyone. We look forward to our next apprentice joining us.

A member of the Mæ B team and Mæ Zero team attended the B Corp Louder Than Words festival in September 2024. We were inspired by the B Corp leaders and all the workshop we attended. After learning more about the Better Business Act, we joined the coalition. Using the principles of the Act, we ensured our own Code of Ethics fully encapsulated all of Mæ's principles.

www.blueprintforall.org
www.preachinclusion.com

Communities and social impact

Architecture has a huge impact on society and people, and we want our impact to always be positive.

Our role at Mæ is to ensure that all people are able to use every part of society, creating places for all where everyone benefits.

Inclusion plays the biggest part in delivering social value across our projects. We create environments where people feel that they are acknowledged, understood and respected. Therefore, we embed inclusion in both our practice and our projects. If we don't consciously build inclusion into our work, then we will be exclusive.

To create positive impact through our work, we think about the people who will make a home in our buildings, and the communities that will live, work and play in our neighbourhoods. Thinking about them on a day-to-day basis, we work with a higher purpose.

We deliver social impact through our design approach, through engagement with local people, and through additional, connected community, education and employment opportunities within every local neighbourhood we work with.

Mae's social impact through design

Designing homes that work, both environmentally and socially. Our quality of life is aligned with the quality of our environment, our homes, our neighbourhood. We think about how our experience of home is enhanced with every step we take, from the street to the front door.

For example, this could be through creating desirable homes with shared lobbies and garden views, where value is generated from arrival. Or through dual aspect flats that afford natural light and ventilation, and balconies that can feel like outdoor rooms.

Working in dense cities such as London and Manchester, we carefully consider overshadowing, ensuring more daylight in each home. We design generous, flexible homes that are fit for both living and working at home, and are adaptable for long-term changes for individuals, families and senior living residents.

We always check that our spaces are inclusive and suit the needs of the future residents. We create

Year 10 students from West Kentish Town in Camden, end of week learning and sharing presentation

layouts that optimise internal space and quality of experience.

Passivhaus principles are embedded in our designs reducing the risks of overheating and reducing the maintenance costs and daily running costs.

We ensure environmentally friendly forms of transportation are promoted through considered cycle, buggy and mobility scooter storage, and we encourage social connections through safe pathways, clear signage and vibrant, welcoming open spaces

Mae's social impact through meaningful engagement

We value local people.

Within a rapidly evolving context, the neighbourhoods we work in – in London and throughout the UK - offer the potential for sustainable homes and communities, as part of a thriving neighbourhood with a mix and diversity that responds to local need.

To achieve this ambition, we identify the aspects that have the biggest positive impact on local people's quality of life in order to focus the project. On each project we adopt an innovative bespoke engagement programme to develop and test our approach with local people as part of our design process.

We use this collaborative approach to gain deeper appreciation of the area, generate a brief of residents' needs, and to test ideas on site with local stakeholders as part of a practice which values perspective and expertise.

Open City Accelerate alumni students, career workshop for CVs, portfolios and interview skills

We know our audience

Our primary focus is on reaching and encouraging participation from local residents, community hubs, and local businesses. We reach out to key stakeholders, including those who are most vulnerable - especially youth and older persons groups who have historically been 'hard to reach' - using both digital tools and in-person events to break down barriers to engagement.

Our work in collaboration with our client, engaging with under-represented groups enables us to identify and enter into a genuine dialogue with members of the community ensuring their voices are welcomed and represented in design reviews from the outset

Once we really know and understand the community – the different cultures, socio-economic groups, under-represented groups – then we create a clear strategy to engage with them. Engagement should not just be linked to the start of a project (i.e. as a pre-planning requirement) as we need to invest in engagement longer-term, both through our design approach and our social value programme.

We look at the lifespan of engagement – from conception through to occupation and operation, and now include the RIBA Plan of Works Engagement Overlay in our engagement strategies.

Mae's social impact through additional opportunities

On many of our projects (with local authorities, housing associations and developers) we are asked to 'add' a **social value** offer that our project team will deliver alongside the project stage deliverables. We fund and resource the social value as part of commitment to 'adding' to project and people who live there.

The key to planning and delivering the very best impact is to link social value to context. It must respond to place, particularly in areas where people do not have power or who have limited influence. We truly understand the community we are working in. There is no 'one offer fits all' approach.

It is not about what we want to deliver but what the community wants and needs. We are always inclusive. If are really thinking about the people, then inclusion is our strategy and social impact is the outcome.

Why social impact is so important

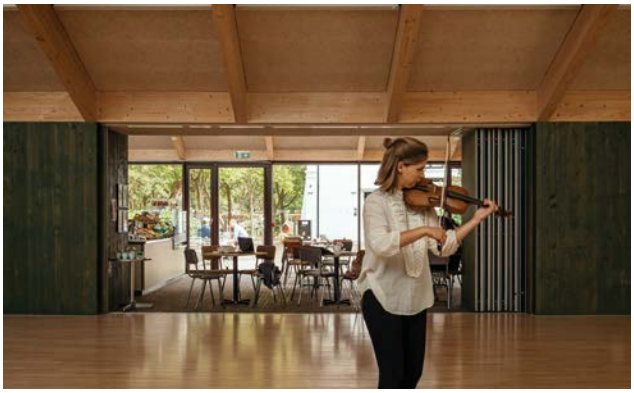
Successful social value is the most impactful when people can see themselves in change.

It is essential that the people we are working with feel included and invested in the homes and buildings we design (for them), the masterplans we plan (for them), and understand the process and benefits throughout. Therefore, it is important to we embed ourselves within the community and ensure we give voices to all and create a positive impact.

It is equally important for our clients that we invest in planning and delivering a thoughtful and meaningful social value offer. Often our clients have their own social value impact objectives that they want to see delivered on the project. They want to be reassured that we are aligned with their social value principles and will fully resource and fund the programme.

Finally, it is important to us. Mæ is a socially driven practice and everyone who is on our team (and our project team collaborators) wants to be part of delivering sustainable, resilient and socially conscious architecture and urbanism, creating work that exists in harmony with the planet and enriches culture and society.

We can only achieve this by creating inclusive, welcoming places together with the people who use our buildings (social), by responding positively to the climate emergency, design resilient, low-carbon architecture (sustainable) and going beyond conventional thinking to make imaginative, affordable spaces that exceed people's expectations (spatial).



Social impact through design, illustrated at our projects Caudale and Kersfield Houses in Camden, The John Morden Centre, Agar Grove and Sands End Arts & Community Centre

Collective action

The last year has been a great year for collaboration across the built environment. We have been fortunate to the opportunity to engage and learn with a diverse group of our peers, all with the overarching objective to create sustainable architecture that prioritises both users and the community.

Architects' Action for Affordable Housing

As a founding member of AA4AH, the coalition is focusing on 5 Affordable Housing Priorities for an affordable housing renaissance.

We have set out 5 affordable housing priorities where we are working to take positive action with our supporters:

1. Prioritise Affordable Housing to deliver growth - more quality affordable Housing built, delivering economic prosperity for all.

2. Link Net Zero and Affordable Housing policies - deliver climate change commitments and reduce fuel poverty through low cost energy efficient affordable housing.

3. Build a resilient, fair and sustainable industry - a modernised and skilled housing industry, capable of delivering 1.5m homes over 5 years and more beyond.

4. Create equity in housing supply - improving access to affordable homes where they are needed.

5. Empower diversity of housing delivery with a self-build and community housing drive - more community focussed housing developments, more direct involvement of local communities, more affordable home ownership.

A good home is the foundation everyone should enjoy, a human right that too many are living without. As architects we recognise the role we can play in helping to improve housing through design, planning and advocacy. We came together in the build up to the election and are now looking to engage with government to help them in their ambition to deliver the biggest boost to affordable housing in a generation.

www.5affordablehousingpriorities.co.uk

The Museum of the Home

Mæ Founder Director Alex Ely was appointed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport as Chair of the Museum of the Home.

The Museum of the Home reveals stories of home life, past, present and future. Its vision is to inspire everyone to explore the meaning of home through our exhibitions, displays, programming and online content. No other museum in the country specialises in this particular aspect of our national heritage.

Since re-opening in 2021, following an £18.8m refurbishment, Museum of the Home is realising its vision to encourage and challenge different ways of thinking about domestic life today with stories that reveal and rethink the ways we live, to help us live better together.

The Museum's main funder is the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The Museum of the Home is a specialist museum, located in Hoxton, London. It has outstanding collections, and engaging displays covering 400 years of the history of the UK home, and is set in beautiful buildings and gardens. It enjoys a reputation for high-quality learning and engagement programmes and is known as one of London's most friendly and welcoming museums.

https://museumofthehome.org.uk

London Practice Forum

As a founding member of the LPF, we continue to play a role in this collective of London architectural practices who care about the city, its people and its built environment. We came together with a shared interest in our city and its citizens, and to address what we considered to be fundamental challenges facing the industry such as the ongoing climate crisis, the profound lack of diversity within the architectural profession.

www.londonpracticeforum.london

Projects, people, planet

We choose the projects we work on based on the sustainability principles outlined in the brief, the openness of the client to embed social and environmental standards into the project, and the possibility of using innovative sustainable methods and materials.

We collaborate with many other architectural practices and independently research innovative materials and building methods, sharing knowledge and contributing to sustainable working groups.

Our Mæ Zero studio team have taken ownership of our environmental targets and timeline through our Environmental Management System objectives, ensuring knowledge share, standards and clear measurement and outcomes.

As an architecture practice we have signed up to the RIBA Climate Challenge 2030. The RIBA has developed the 2030 Climate Challenge to help architects design within a climate conscious trajectory and provides a stepped approach towards reaching net zero, through a series of targets for practices to adopt to reduce operational energy, embodied carbon and potable water.

RIBA Climate Challenge 2030 Pledge

The 2030 Climate Challenge targets consider the latest recommendations from the Green Construction board and have been developed in consultation with industry experts and UK professional bodies from across the built environment industries. The targets are around:

Operational energy
Embodied carbon
Potable water use
Health and wellbeing

Architects Declare Pledge

'The twin crises of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss are the most serious issue of our time. Buildings and construction play a major part, accounting for nearly 40% of energy-related carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions whilst also having a significant impact on our natural habitats.

For everyone working in the construction industry, meeting the needs of our society without breaching the earth's ecological boundaries will demand a paradigm shift in our behaviour. Together with our clients, we will need to commission and design buildings, cities and infrastructures as indivisible components of a larger, constantly regenerating and self-sustaining system.

The research and technology exist for us to begin that transformation now, but what has been lacking is collective will. Recognising this, we are committing to strengthen our working practices to create architecture and urbanism that has a more positive impact on the world around us.'

Our pledge to the Climate Challenge and Architects Declare, has led us to develop **Mæ's Climate Action Roadmap:**

Whole Life Carbon Design Tool	Undertake Whole Life Carbon Assessments (WLCAs) to inform design decisions regarding embodied, operational and net zero carbon.
Retrofit, Refurbishment and Reused/Reclaimed Materials	Practice retrofit first as a more carbon efficient alternative to demolition and new build whenever there is a viable choice.
Ecology and the Built Environment	Biodiversity and water use. Biodiversity Net Gain.
Circular Design Approach	Encourage reuse, minimise waste, circular economy. View our buildings as material banks.
Natural Materials and Low Carbon Design	Accelerate the shift to low embodied carbon materials in all our work.
Evaluate Projects	Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) / Building Performance Evaluation (BPE).
Collaborate	Collaborate with engineers, contractors and clients to reduce our impact.
Advocate and Share Knowledge	Raise awareness of the climate and biodiversity emergencies and the urgent need for action amongst our clients, collaborators, supply chains, etc. Demonstrate our commitment.
Increase Knowledge	Share knowledge and research, and raise awareness internally at Mae.

The following three Mæ projects illustrate our approach to embedding environmental and social impact in our work.

The John Morden Centre: supporting healthier, happier and more independent lives

Winner of the 2023 Stirling Prize, The John Morden Centre provides a social space and health facilities for the Morden College residents. The centre consolidates previously dispersed services into a single, accessible hub, offering medical consultation rooms, care facilities, a café, craft workshops, art spaces, and a theatre. The design aims to foster social interaction, reduce isolation, and enhance the well-being of its users.

Morden College is a Grade I listed alms house in Blackheath, London founded in 1695 by Sir John Morden and built by Sir Christopher Wren's master builder and successor, Edward Strong.

The new building makes reference to the historic architecture in its colonnade, roofscape and brickwork. The generous social spaces of the new building are linked by a meandering colonnade, which forms a spine of circulation and opens up connections to the mature landscaped gardens which characterise the site.

In this manner, it sensitively engages with existing context in a familiar architectural language, delivered using modern methods of construction to provide a high quality, long lasting, and sustainable facility for the next 100 years of the College's work. The John Morden Hall has been retained, integrated and refurbished as part of the project.

A design embedded in social and environmental goals

The building aims for a low carbon footprint and is constructed of load-bearing Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) structural panels. These are highly insulated with an outer skin of self-supporting masonry. The walls have a full brick wall base with half-stone brick leaf on top arranged in a Flemish Bond with a lime mortar, reflecting the more traditional craftsmanship of the main college building

The scheme includes retrofit, refurbishing a large 1970s assembly hall, with upgrades to the building fabric, new flooring and an acoustic ceiling suitable for music and theatrical performances.

A number of smaller lean-to structures were demolished to make way for the new building. 10,000 bricks from the demolition were salvaged and used to construct new retaining and garden walls on the site.

Key materials include:
- CLT structured framework
- Glulam columns
- Glazed curtain walling
- Fair faced brickwork
- Zinc and green roofs
- Underfloor heating and cooling

The Environmental Engineering strategy options have been developed to provide a quality built environment, focusing on occupants' comfort as well as the Whole Life Cost (WLC) considerations of life cycle analysis, value for money, benefits to the environment, and their social impact.

The thermal performance of the building fabric will exceed the current Building Regulations Approval Document Part L2 (2013) and provide an air tightness improvement from 10 to 3.0 m3/(m2.h) of the new build fabric. Target air permeability of 10 m3/(m2.h) for the existing Morden Hall.

A low energy lighting strategy has been adapted, using light emitting diode (LED) technology and low energy fluorescent fittings. Sunlight controls have been added to the lighting in the colonnade, dining area and reception.

A fully naturally ventilated strategy with standard intermittent extraction fans fitted to wet room areas. Hot water generation is via low Nox, high efficiency condensing gas boiler, while air source heat pumps provide heating and cooling via underfloor heating and cooling systems.

The centre has successfully addressed issues of social isolation among the elderly, providing a welcoming environment that encourages engagement and activity. Its design has influenced discussions on the role of architecture in social care, exemplifying how built environments can support health, dignity, and community integration.

The John Morden Centre also won RIBA National award, RIBA London Building of the Year award, and the New London Architecture Award, Caring Prize.

The John Morden Centre won the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2023, the UK's highest award for architecture.

RIBA President Muyiwa Oki, said: 'Loneliness and isolation are critical issues, particularly for older people. The John Morden Centre's elegance and efficacy set a high standard for spaces that support healthier, happier and more independent lives. It illustrates the positive potential of architecture to strengthen vibrant and active communities. This is a skilfully designed package that minimises the building's impact on our planet's delicate ecology, while also harnessing the therapeutic value of the surrounding nature. It stands as a testament to the vision and ambition of Morden College, Mæ's creativity – and the exemplary collaboration between them.'

RIBA Stirling Prize jury, Ellen van Loon, said: 'The John Morden Centre is a place of joy and inspiration. It sensitively and seamlessly integrates medical facilities and social spaces, delivering a bold and hopeful model for the design of health and care centres for the elderly. Creating an environment that lifts the spirits and fosters community is evident at every turn and in every detail. This building provides comfort and warmth, with thoughtful features designed to prevent isolation. It illustrates how buildings can themselves be therapeutic – supporting care and instilling a sense of belonging. Great architecture orients people so they can thrive, and this building is exemplary at achieving exactly that.'

Agar Grove Estate Regeneration: delivering the UK's largest Passivhaus housing scheme

Agar Grove will be the UK's largest Passivhaus project, the homes are a testament to the idea that designing for affordability needn't compromise on space, quality, or ability to enrich lives.

Agar Grove's environmental approach delivers both social value - in reducing fuel poverty amongst the residents on low incomes - as well as environmental value, by driving down operational carbon.

Its placemaking agenda seeks to improve health and wellbeing of residents, and enable a sustainable community to grow; helping deliver on the Mayor's commitment to becoming a zero-carbon city, improving mental health and wellbeing, and building strong communities.

We are currently amidst a global climate crisis, with the construction industry responsible for 49% of carbon emissions in the UK. We believe we must take rapid action to de-carbonise the building industry to achieve the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Low carbon construction encompasses a wide range of topics from transport, material selection, flexibility operational carbon, embodied carbon, circular economy strategies, and end of life issues such as demountabilty and recyclability.

With the design team and the client, we collectively drove the integration of Passivhaus standards in order to tackle fuel poverty, since this reduces heating/cooling demand costs by 90%. Our Agar Grove project is the largest Passivhaus development in the UK, and demonstrates our commitment to sustainable and net zero carbon construction.

Together with specialist consultants and engineers, we modelled the building layout to optimise solar gain and minimise heat loss. Employing a 'fabric-first' approach, the mixed tenure Agar Grove scheme achieves Passivhaus standard on all of the new plots, through careful design of airtightness, form-factor, orientation, detailing, and glazing ratio, contributing to improved thermal comfort and air quality.

Operational energy
A number of 'fabric-first' design methods were incorporated at Agar Grove to passively provide thermal comfort whilst reducing heating/cooling demand, and helping to achieve net zero carbon.

Embodied carbon
The materials utilised across the scheme are predominantly reconstituted brick and stone, reducing embodied carbon and promoting a circular economy.

The future of heat
Passive heat sources, such as solar gains, residents and household appliances, supply much of the heat demand within Agar Grove, with remaining heat provided by an air source heat pump.

The landscape plan seeks to significantly enhance the ecological value of site and provide a planting

Passivhaus is a tried and tested solution that gives us a range of proven approaches to deliver net-zero-ready new and existing buildings optimised for a decarbonised grid and augmented for occupant health and wellbeing. Passivhaus buildings provide a high level of occupant comfort using very little energy for heating and cooling

framework which creates green streets and spaces as a setting for the community. Planting is used to provide visual amenity at the same time as improving species diversity and offering a response to predicted climate change through the use of shade providing trees, water sensitive urban design

Post occupancy evaluation and monitoring can be a powerful tool to understand the needs of users and clients and how they change over time. This feedback is not only immediately useful to resolve any outstanding issues of the build but is crucial in informing the next generation of projects by providing architects with key lessons that can be applied to and inform subsequent projects. The key to a successful post-occupancy evaluation is having a good relationship with the residents.

Residents participated in seasonal feedback surveys. Responses showed satisfaction with comfort, layout, and air quality. Camden has responded to knowledge gaps with follow-up visits. The project informed borough-wide energy strategies and design guides.

Residents now benefit from larger, fit-for-purpose homes and significant cuts in energy bills, reducing the impact of fuel poverty, which bears particular importance given the current energy crisis. Similarly, renewing focus on green space builds upon existing community ties to tackle social exclusion, while safe, neighbourhood connections integrate the estate back into Camden and prioritise residents' quality of life.

Homes overlook communal amenity and play spaces, promoting security and community. The secluded communal garden has doorstep play - resident feedback shows that residents are happy with the new play spaces and these are well-used by children. The Lifetime Homes compliant design, and lift and wheelchair accessible flats provide inclusive accommodation.

The post occupancy evaluation also revealed a number of findings we adopt for other schemes. These include priorities in terms of flexible living arrangements, importance of attractive outdoor amenity in the form of balconies and gardens. The residents point out the success of the shared garden and the allotment spaces which are currently used and have incentivised the establishing of a resident's group.

'Clean, outdoor space, lighter. Will never feel cold in this flat.'

Sands End Arts & Community Centre: a low carbon design and build approach

Sands End is a building of its place, enhancing the social and leisure offer in the local area, Sands End Arts and Community Centre in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is a welcome addition for the local community.

Sited beside the Clancarty Lodge in the north western corner of South Park, the centre caters to a wide range of users; providing a café alongside spaces for social and educational functions, clubs and events.

Hammersmith and Fulham Council's ambitious brief sought to deliver community facilities that promoted social integration within the community and was designed in close collaboration with future users and stakeholders. It was built at no cost to residents after the Council negotiated all the financial contributions to come from Tideway and other developers.

The form of the building takes inspiration from the 19th century glasshouses – built by the pre-eminent horticulturalist James Veitch– that previously occupied the site at South Park. Veitch and Sons were one of the most important nurserymen of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

This is a building to uplift the human spirit

The design starts with the building's setting. Between affluent neighbourhoods and the borough's social house estates, the building is intended as a democratic building for all strata of society- open, accessible and welcoming. Community run and for use by the community.

A courtyard offers a place to gather, protected from the road by a Victorian garden wall. Lamp posts angle towards each other as if having a conversation. The courtyard forms a threshold to the building and a route to the park.

Landscaped spaces thread through the scheme, creating habitats and a green corridor to connect the hard urban streetscape and the parkland beyond. These feature new planting, trees, hedges, green walls and a variety of wildlife habitats, such as beehives and insect hotels to nurture local wildlife.

The design aims for continuity between outside and in through a series of landscaped thresholds. The interior is composed of loosely arranged, generous spaces intended to uplift your spirit. An intimate entrance opens to expansive vaulted rooms. The café opens onto a garden, with a walnut grove that mediates between the courtyard.

Our imperative in designing the Sands End Community and Arts Centre was to minimise carbon consumption throughout its construction and ongoing use, as well as to employ strategies of creative reuse in the refurbishment of the existing historic lodge structure.

'This beautiful new centre will enhance people's wellbeing across Sands End and south Fulham, it has been set up to ensure that it is truly for people of all backgrounds, and that residents are in the driving seat for this new community space in Hammersmith and Fulham.'
Cllr Andrew Jones, Hammersmith and Fulham

'A meeting place, a hub of activity across languages, cultures and economic background, a venue for creative expression, a flexible space which encourages the community to be flexible in its use. Perhaps most importantly, it will be what the broader Sands End community want it to be; today and for decades to come.'

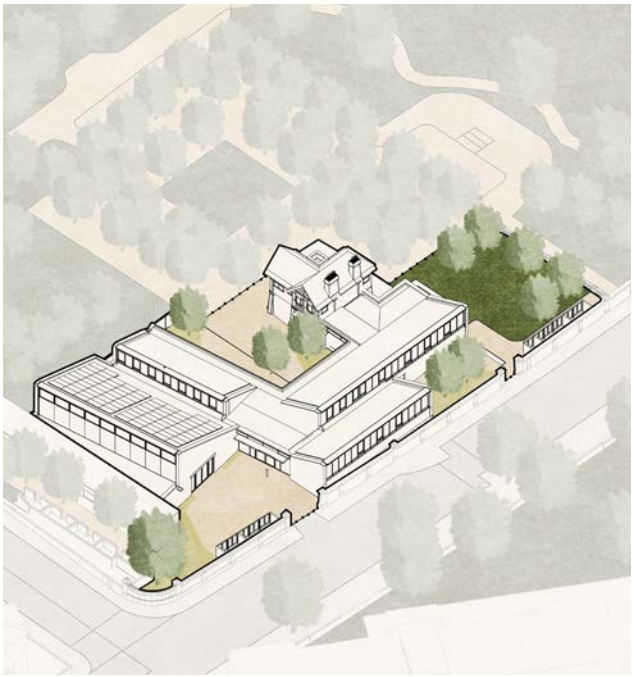
The building aims to maximise return for minimal use of resource, blending together several programmatic elements within a highly sustainable shell. As a fully timber structure, the centre did not require complicated detailing to avoid cold bridging. Structure is left exposed to avoid unnecessary additional internal finishes.

The building achieves a lifetime embodied carbon figure of 409 kg/CO2e/m2 including sequestration, thereby exceeding the RIBA's 2030 climate target.

Over 35% of the building material is composed of recycled materials, with a responsibly sourced CLT timber structure, which has inherently low embodied energy values. Recyclable construction materials have also been considered. The design promotes passive ventilation, and is oriented and designed to manage sun shading and mitigate overheating.

We designed the centre to evolve throughout the lifespan of the facility, to accommodate change as the needs of the local community develops. The mix of flexible-use spaces – including a café, group event spaces, and dedicated day nursery facilities – affords Hammersmith and Fulham council the opportunity to generate long-term revenue to support these aims, facilitating economic as well as social sustainability.

Sands End Arts & Community Centre was shortlisted for the Stirling Prize in 2022, having won RIBA National and London Building of the Year awards.



Our company and our planet

Over the last few years we have changed a number of suppliers, services and collaborators to companies that are more aligned with our social and environmental ethics. As a London-based company we commit to purchase 50% of our products and services from local and independent suppliers.

We have been ISO14001 accredited since 2017 and our Environmental Management System (EMS) is managed by our sustainability group, Mæ Zero, focusing on our project objectives such as building materials and circular economy through research, education, knowledge sharing and collaborating with industry leaders in the environmental field.

As a practice, our EMS is a framework for reducing our carbon emissions. Our objectives over the past five years have resulted in our company reducing paper usage by 90% and stationery and office supplies by 75%. We travel by public transport for 95% of our business journeys and as we focus on local community projects, we have made a handful of flights over the last ten years.

Each year we measure our GHG emissions (measured with SME Climate Hub resources) and for the 2025-26 financial year, we have Scope 1 - 0 tCO2e and Scope 2 - 1.2 tCO2e emissions. Our Scope 3 emissions are 18.7tCO2e. We have met our target of reducing our emissions by 10%, achieving a 17% reduction overall from the 2025-26 year (10% reduction per person).

We have committed to SME Climate Hub reduction of a 50% reduction of emissions by 2030 and net-zero by 2050.

Whilst we are working towards our net-zero commitments, we are off-setting our emissions with carbon credits. We have offset 20 tonnes of emissions in 2025-2026 financial year (Fair Climate Fund Gold Standard carbon credits).

Each year, we donate 5% of our annual profits to selected environmental charities, including Architects Climate Action Network.

SME Climate Hub

The SME Climate Hub is a non-profit global initiative that empowers small to medium sized companies to take climate action and build resilient businesses for the future.

The SME Climate Hub is an initiative of the We Mean Business Coalition, co-founded and operated in partnership with the Exponential Roadmap Initiative and the UN Climate Change High Level Champion's Race to Zero campaign.

By joining the SME Climate Hub we pledge completing the commitment to halve emissions by 2030, achieve net zero by 2050, and report on your progress yearly. Use our free tools and resources to take action.

www.smeclimatehub.org/

Better Business Act

The objective is to see four principles reflected in an amended Section 172 of the Companies Act.

It can no longer be a choice to align the long-term interests of people, planet and profit. The Better Business Act plans to transform the way we do business, so that every single company in the UK takes ownership of its social and environmental impact.

Aligned Interests: the interests of shareholders are now advanced alongside those of wider society and the environment. This establishes a new principle of fiduciary duty within Section 172 of the Companies Act.

Empowering directors: this change must empower directors to exercise their judgement in weighing up and advancing the interests of all stakeholders.

Default change: this change must apply to all businesses by default. It must no longer be optional to benefit wider stakeholders beyond shareholders.

Reflected in reporting: following this change, businesses must report on how they balance people, planet and profit in a strategic report or impact report, where one is currently required.

Mæ have signed up to the Better Business Act coalition.

www.betterbusinessact.org/

Mæ