

Impact Report



April 2023

Mæ

Mæ Impact Report

We design buildings and places that seek to address today's urban, social and environmental challenges. Our aim is always to create buildings and places that enrich culture and society.

At Mæ, we blend creativity, humanity and sustainability. We see the big picture. To us, placemaking is a vital part of the process. Working in the housing, urban design, health & care, and 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 work is guided by 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 studio is made of up three 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, we are aiming to become a B-Corp 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 / high-quality housing; developing the DNA genetic sequence for good housing, using research, POE data and automation we intelligently plan and test our buildings.

To ask any questions or request further information, please contact Denise Heseltine at Mæ - d.heseltine@mae.co.uk / 020 7704 6060

We have started a journey to become B Corp certified and this Impact Report is a current summary of Mæ - our people, our clients, our community and our environment. We have used the five B Corp impact areas - governance, workers, community, environment and customers - to communicate our ethos and future objectives.

Our Governance

Mæ was established in 2001 by our founding director, Alex Ely, and he champions our mission by guiding our three studio teams and our individual project teams. Alex balances working for architecture with civil society, advising government agencies on the built environment.

Alex is supported at director level by Tom Jarman and Denise Heseltine. Tom is our environmental and sustainability leader and project director across multiple regeneration and placemaking projects, answering client briefs with design quality, environmental innovation and inclusive engagement.

Denise is our B Corp guardian. Working alongside our Mæ B team and the wider practice, and using the B Corp framework, she has focused our existing social and environmental achievements (such as our social value and diversity programmes, reduction of our operating carbon emissions, and managing workplace wellbeing & training), and structured our future objectives.

We have amended our Articles of Association to align with both our stakeholders and shareholders ethos (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>)

Alongside the Impact Report, our Code of Ethics are also available on www.mae.co.uk.

We are transparent with our Mæ team and aim to provide a working environment that gives everyone a voice. Through our Mæ Forum, mentoring and regular project team reviews, we welcome ideas and objectives that will enhance our ethos. Our team will play a part in recruiting an advisory board member in 2023-24.

Our People

Our recruitment and induction procedures ensure that our team of brilliant 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 – Architecture Foundation, Open City, Paradigm Network, 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 always pay above the London Living Wage.

Our senior team of directors and associates is 60% women and our gender pay gap is +3% in favour of women. Our practice is 18% 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 and we are currently writing a wellbeing toolkit.

Our Communities

Company

As a practice, we support our community by using local suppliers and services (prioritising 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.

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.

Over 95% projects of our projects last year were in London, and we will continue to prioritise serving our local community

As a member of the London Practice Forum, we are pledged to the Mayors Equality and Diversity Pledge and Future of London's Speaker Diversity Pledge. We undertook mentoring, an internship and workshops with Re-Set-Go, a programme established with the mission of diversifying architecture practices. This year we aim to work with the London Neighbourhood Scholarship.

10% of our annual profit is allocated to our practice social value programme. In addition, we are currently delivering bespoke local social value programmes on 70% of our projects.

As part of our wellbeing programme, we sponsor our team to organise and attend sporting events, sponsoring them to raise money for Wheels for Wellbeing.

Projects

Collaboration - we see local collaborations as merely the starting point for our work in the community. We prioritise the provision of employment opportunities to local residents by working with local suppliers, SMEs and VCSEs to facilitate economic growth.

We prioritise establishing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local community enabling us to contribute to narrowing social and economic inequalities through our education programmes, using local suppliers, as well as funding local festivals, community initiatives, and enterprise events as part of our engagement strategy.

Engagement - we recognise that within a rapidly evolving context, local neighbourhoods offer the potential for establishing beautiful and sustainable homes and communities, as part of a thriving, carbon negative 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 residents' quality of life. 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.

Our Customers

We work in both the public and private sectors focusing on delivering social and affordable housing, community facilities and urban planning. We are currently working in many local London boroughs including Newham, Camden, Brent, Barking & Dagenham, Southwark and Hammersmith & Fulham. Our public sector work in 2022 made up 85% of our projects and enabled us to deliver a 'basic needs' service to the residents of London.

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.

Our goals for 2023-24 is to continue work in public sector and deliver more social infrastructure and health & care buildings, and therefore deliver environmental innovation and social value programmes.

Our Environment

Over the last 12 months we have changed a number of suppliers, services and collaborators to companies that are more aligned with our social and environmental ethics.

We have been ISO14001 accredited since 2017 and our 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% (measured through costs x FTE).

Through Compare Your Footprint we have measured our GHG emissions for 2022-23. We have 0 tCO₂e Scope 1 and 2.1 tCO₂e Scope 2 emissions. Our current Scope 3 is 19 tCO₂e. This has given us baseline measurements to outline proposed reductions and set a programme for the changes.

We have committed to SME Climate Hub reduction of a 50% reduction of emissions by 2030 and net-zero by 2050. Our first objective is a 10% reduction over the next 12 months.

Whilst we are working towards our net-zero commitments, we are off-setting our emissions with Gold Standard carbon credits, focusing on two of the UN Sustainable Development goals – resilient cities and communities, and climate action. We offset 20 tonnes of emissions in April 2023.

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. The 2030 Climate Challenge sets a series of targets for practices to adopt to reduce operational energy, embodied carbon and potable water.

Our Mæ Zero team have taken ownership of our environmental targets and timeline through our ISO14001 objectives.

We choose the projects we work on based on the environmental brief and the openness of the client and/or local authority to use innovative sustainably 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.

Each year, we donate 5% of our annual profits to selected charities, which this year are The Canals & Rivers Trust and The Woodland Trust.