

**Mæ**  
**Code of Ethics**

June 2026

Mæ



## Our code of ethics

**Our practice ethos has always been focused around five main themes: our people, our clients, our collaborators, our communities, and our environment.**

**Every day we work together to deliver our projects to the very highest standards.**

**Our standards are shaped by an essential architectural framework - sustainability, social infrastructure, and spatial qualities.**

**We are a Certified B Corporation®**

### Our Stakeholders

Mæ's work is shaped by the people, organisations and communities we affect. We recognise that our decisions influence not only the quality of buildings and places, but also people's sense of belonging, access to opportunity, wellbeing, safety and long-term social value.

We therefore take a stakeholder-led approach to practice and design. We seek to understand the needs, aspirations and concerns of those connected to our work, and to use this insight to inform how we operate as a business, how we collaborate, and how we shape places.

### Employees

Our employees are central to Mæ's purpose and culture. We engage with our team through regular practice meetings, project reviews, one-to-one conversations, appraisals, training, knowledge-sharing sessions, satisfaction questionnaires, mentoring and our Mæ Forum.

We aim to create an open, inclusive and supportive working environment where people can contribute ideas, challenge decisions constructively, develop professionally and help shape the direction of the practice.

We use employee feedback to improve how we work, including our policies, project processes, wellbeing support, learning opportunities and approach to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.

### Clients

We engage with clients as long-term partners, not simply as commissioners of individual projects. At the outset of each commission, we work to understand the client's objectives, constraints, governance requirements, social value and environmental priorities and measures of success.

We maintain dialogue through structured meetings, workshops, design reviews, reporting and decision-making checkpoints.

Our aim is to provide clear, thoughtful and evidence-based advice, while helping clients balance ambition, viability, sustainability, deliverability and the needs of the communities they serve.

### Consultants and collaborators

Mæ works collaboratively with consultants, design teams and specialist advisers to create integrated, robust and imaginative outcomes. We engage consultants early, define clear roles and responsibilities, and establish open channels for coordination, technical review and constructive challenge.

We value the knowledge and perspective that each discipline brings. Through regular workshops, design team meetings, shared digital information, technical reviews and collaborative problem-solving, we seek to build mutual trust and ensure that decisions are joined up, evidence-based and aligned with the project's wider social, environmental and spatial ambitions.

### Suppliers

Our suppliers form part of our wider value chain and contribute to the ethical, environmental and social impact of our practice. We seek to engage suppliers in a fair, transparent and responsible way, considering not only cost and quality, but also their approach to employment, environmental stewardship, human rights, equality, responsible sourcing and social value.

We ask our clients, consultants and suppliers to share information on their policies, certifications, working practices and environmental commitments, which



Community stakeholder engagement at Harriet Hardy House, London Borough of Southwark

structures our Ethical Framework. We aim to build relationships with organisations that share our values and are willing to improve their impact over time.

## Communities

Mæ believes that good places are shaped through listening, dialogue and shared understanding. We engage with communities to understand local identity, lived experience, existing assets, barriers, hopes and concerns.

This can include workshops, exhibitions, interviews, surveys, walking tours, youth engagement, resident meetings, stakeholder mapping and co-design activities, plus our social value programmes.

We recognise that some people and groups have less power to influence decisions about the places where they live, work or spend time. We therefore seek to create accessible and inclusive engagement processes that make space for a range of voices, particularly those who are often underrepresented in planning, development and regeneration.

## Residents

Residents are often the people most directly affected by our work, particularly in housing, estate renewal, regeneration, health, care and community projects. We engage with residents respectfully and transparently,

recognising the importance of trust, continuity and clear communication.

Our approach is to listen carefully to residents' lived experience, understand how existing homes and neighbourhoods work in practice, and reflect this knowledge in briefing, design and decision-making.

We seek to explain proposals clearly, respond honestly to concerns, and ensure that resident insight helps shape outcomes that are practical, inclusive and socially valuable.

## Environment

We recognise the environment as a stakeholder in our work. This means considering the impact of our decisions on climate, biodiversity, natural resources and future generations, and seeking to design and operate in ways that reduce harm, restore ecological value and support a regenerative built environment.

On our projects, this could mean:

- considering whole-life carbon at the start of a project
- prioritising retrofit, reuse and circular design where possible
- choosing lower-impact materials
- protecting and enhancing biodiversity
- reducing waste in design and construction
- advising clients honestly where environmental harm is likely
- considering long-term resilience for people, places and ecosystems
- reviewing suppliers for environmental standards and carbon impacts

## Accountability and continuous improvement

Mæ's leadership is responsible for ensuring that stakeholder engagement is embedded in our practice, our project processes and our relationships. We review feedback, reflect on lessons learned and adapt our approach where evidence shows that we can improve.

Through this approach, we aim to build trust, strengthen collaboration and ensure that our work contributes positively to employees, clients, consultants, suppliers, communities, residents and the wider environment.

## Our people

We are certified as **London Mayor Good Work Standard Employer**.

Our leaders teach, guide and mentor each other and our team, and as project leaders, we always aim to set an example and inspire each other and those we work with. We adopt a thorough approach to leadership with a clear line of responsibility and plan continuous development for individuals and project teams.

We provide a supportive environment which encourages collaboration, learning, sharing, and mentoring. Through our support guides, handbooks, and training programmes, we ensure we give our team the knowledge and skills to undertake their roles with confidence and satisfaction.

We have prioritised creating a transparent and safe environment that encourages everyone to have a voice. Our workplace does not permit any personal negative criticism or comments, and we always encourage respect and support within our team.

Harassment and victimisation within the practice is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All our team receive anti-harassment and anti-bullying training, and our managers are trained on how to respond to reports of harassment. Our practice manager undertakes regular



Mæ's B Corp Continued Improvement Plan Workshop

risk assessments and ensure policies and handbooks are aligned with legislation.

We ensure strong communication between our team through appraising, mentoring and our employee feedback forum and surveys, and ensure open, clear methods of communication to our senior team.

We are **Living Wage Foundation** accredited, and will always pay above the London Living Wage to all employees and interns.

Wellbeing and mental health are our focus on our people-first approach. We ensure we always have a trained mental health first aider available to our team, as well as a Employee Assistance Programme.

Our Mæ B team run our annual Wellbeing Week, and we published our first Wellbeing Toolkit this year, which includes an employee wellbeing bursary.

## Our clients and collaborators

We ensure that there is no conflict of interest with our clients and collaborators. We will 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 consultants 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 the following:

**Environmental impact:** when choosing clients and consultants, we will consider the impact of their operations on society and the environment. We will prioritise working with organisations that have a positive impact and are committed to sustainability, notably organisations that have strong ESG practices and an action plan to achieve environmental, social and governance goals.

This can include considering factors such as the carbon footprint of clients and consultants, their approach to sustainability, and their record of environmental stewardship.

In terms of carbon footprint, it is important we prioritise working with organisations that are committed to reducing their carbon emissions and mitigating the impact of their operations on the environment. This can include working with clients and consultants who have committed to a zero-carbon goal, or those that have implemented strategies to reduce their carbon footprint.



Mæ and Open City 2-day careers workshop for local students

**Provenance of finance:** the provenance of finance is another important consideration; we recognise that it is important to ensure that the organisations we work with are using ethical and sustainable sources of funding. We will actively avoid organisations involved in unethical financial practices, or their association with organisations that have a history of financial improprieties.

**Destination of profits:** we will consider the destination of profits when choosing clients and consultants. This includes evaluating how organisations use their profits and how they reinvest in their operations and communities. We strive to prioritise working with organisations that are committed to reinvesting in their communities, and those that use their profits to drive positive social and environmental impact.

**Human rights record:** we consider the human rights records of clients and consultants when choosing who to work with. This includes evaluating the organisation's policies and practices related to labour rights, discrimination, and human rights abuses. We will avoid working with organisations that do not follow fair labour practices. We ensure that all our clients have anti-harassment and anti-victimisation policies that align with ours.

**Social value:** we chose clients and collaborators who see the value in our social ethos and prioritise the stakeholders and residents who live or will be living in the communities we work.

By considering these factors, we can ensure that we are choosing clients and consultants who align with our ethics and ethos, and that we are making a positive impact on society and the environment.

## Our communities

Where we live matters and we believe that good design can help foster social cohesion, reduce crime, and improve health and wellbeing. We create buildings that seek to address today's urban, social, and environmental challenges.

Our aim is always to add value: economic value and, crucially, social value. We design with the needs of the end-user foremost in our mind.

By listening carefully to the needs of a community whilst offering ideas and guidance with which they can engage and anticipate new possibilities, we can look to exceed the expectations of the future residents and users of our projects.

We thrive on collaboration and our priority is to work on local projects for local people. We talk, and listen, to the people within our communities as we are creating their homes and we are enhancing their communities.

Meaningful consultation is central to our work and our duty is to the end users of our buildings, so we ensure that our processes are transparent and accountable to them.

Our added social value and diversity programmes are led by our Mæ B team, focusing on education, skills, employment, economy, environment, and community.

Through financial commitments, jobs, skill-sharing, local spend and volunteer time we feed added social value back into communities and industry initiatives.

We donate a minimum of 10% of annual profits back into practice social value such as sponsorships, bursaries, and education programmes each year.- we deliver bespoke community added social value programmes on many of our projects.

### **Mæ Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment**

Mæ designs buildings, places and neighbourhoods that affect people's everyday lives, their homes, streets, workplaces, civic spaces and social infrastructure. Our work shapes how people access opportunity, care, community, nature and belonging. We therefore recognise that justice, equity, diversity and inclusion are not separate from our work as architects and urban designers. They are central to how we practise, how we make decisions, and how we contribute to a better built environment.

We are committed to operating in a just, equitable, diverse and inclusive manner across our practice, our projects, our relationships with clients and collaborators, and the communities affected by our work.

For Mæ, justice means recognising and addressing the unequal conditions that shape people's experience of the built environment. It means using our skills to challenge exclusion, support social value and contribute to places that are fairer, healthier and more accessible.

Equity means understanding that people do not all start from the same position. We seek to identify and remove barriers within our workplace, our design processes and our engagement with communities, so that people have fair access to opportunity, participation and good outcomes.

Diversity means valuing different identities, experiences, disciplines, cultures and perspectives. We believe that better design comes from broad participation and from teams that reflect the complexity of the communities and places we serve.

Inclusion means creating the conditions for people to participate with dignity, confidence and influence. This applies to our employees, collaborators, clients, consultants, suppliers, residents, service users and community stakeholders.

We are especially accountable to those who may have less power to shape decisions that affect them, including residents of social housing, older people, disabled people, children and young people, lower-income communities, people from underrepresented backgrounds, and those whose voices are often excluded from development and regeneration processes. We recognise that design decisions can either reinforce existing inequalities or help to address them.

Within our own practice, we will continue to build a workplace culture that is fair, respectful and inclusive. This includes reviewing our policies and practices through a JEDI lens, supporting equitable recruitment and progression, listening to staff feedback, and creating a working environment where people can speak up, contribute and thrive.

Within our project work, we will seek to embed JEDI principles in briefing, research, engagement, design, procurement and delivery. We will use evidence, lived experience and stakeholder feedback to understand

barriers and inequities, and to shape places that are accessible, welcoming and socially valuable.

Within our wider relationships, we will encourage clients, consultants, suppliers and collaborators to support inclusive and ethical practice. We will seek to work with organisations that share our commitment to fairness, social value, environmental responsibility and respect for people and communities.

Mæ's leadership is responsible for approving, overseeing and reviewing this commitment, and for ensuring that it is reflected in our policies, practice management, project processes and external relationships. We will review our progress, respond where harm or exclusion is identified, and update our actions as evidence and stakeholder feedback require.

This commitment forms part of Mæ's broader purpose: to design buildings and places that uplift the human spirit, contribute to an inclusive and regenerative economy, and support better outcomes for people, communities and the planet.

## Our environment and sustainability

We treat sustainability as a core objective of all our work. We approach sustainability both in terms of energy efficiency as well as creating sustainable communities. A new project, therefore, needs to be designed with the existing and future community needs in mind.

This may cover issues concerning access to public transport, local services & amenities, and to outdoor recreation space, tenure and accommodation mix which help to create an inclusive sustainable community.

We consider the issue of futureproofing as being of considerable importance for sustainability. By designing in flexibility and allowing for the future adaptability as well as choosing building materials that are long life and low maintenance, we hope to ensure that our homes are futureproofed.

With regards to energy use, we design to with a fabric-first approach. We incorporate simple environmental technology as a matter

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

### Mæ's Climate Action Plan

of course and all projects we have a policy of using low impact, local, low embodied energy construction materials that is sourced from reclaimed and recycled sources where possible sourced.

Our team has industry leading experience of sustainable design principles and standards and our Mæ Zero review all new sustainability policies and products, sharing knowledge to our project teams.

We donate a minimum of 5% of our annual profits to environmental initiatives.

As a RIBA Chartered Practice, we abide by the RIBA Code of Professional Practice, which sets out Standards of Professional Performance.

Our commitment as a member of the London Practice Forum, we adhere to the forum charter.

For further information on our ethics and ethos, please contact our **B Corp® Champion: Denise Heseltine** [d.heseltine@mae.co.uk](mailto:d.heseltine@mae.co.uk)