



Network

News

March 2010

AECB 2010 Anniversary Conference, 10-11 June 2010, Milton Keynes

Celebrating 21 years of the AECB

From New Towns to Ecotowns, Optional tours 12 June 2010

The programme is shaping up nicely for this year's 21st anniversary conference. In a packed and topical first day, delegates will hear from John Walker, Chairman of Passivhaus Buildings, on the environmental expectations for Milton Keynes and the new towns of 40 years ago compared with the expectations of today. Robert Napier, Chairman of the Homes and Communities Agency, will then look at the relationship between sustainable building and the move to more sustainable living. This is followed by Sunand Pasad, past president of the RIBA and chair of CABE's design Review Panel for Ecotowns, who will review the opportunities Ecotowns have for achieving excellence in an integrated approach to building design and the wider setting. Further presentations include a look at sustainable water and integrated land management by Nick Haycock and input from each of the four UK Ecotowns.

In what promises to be a fun session, cast your mind back over the past two decades with a look back at the AECB at the forefront of sustainable building over the past 21 years. More details on the plans to celebrate this major landmark will follow so dig out your old photos...

Ten building technology workshops over the two days will complete this year's programme and details on these will be announced shortly. As with all AECB conferences, plenty of time is allocated for discussion and a variety of tours will be arranged for the Saturday following the conference sessions.

Day two of the conference also offers delegates the opportunity to attend the 1st Passivhaus Buildings Conference which is co-located with the AECB Annual General Meeting (please see the separate programme information on this new event, details below).

Last year's conference sold out and you are advised to book early for this special 21st anniversary event. Online registration will open in early March.

1st Passivhaus Buildings Conference, 11 June 2010, Milton Keynes

Passivhaus enters the UK mainstream

In association with the AECB 2010 Annual Conference

Organised by the newly formed Passivhaus Buildings, this one day meeting will review progress in adopting the Passivhaus standard in the UK. A fantastic line-up of speakers includes Berthold Kaufman of the Passivhaus Institute, Lynne Sullivan, Chair of the Building Regulatory Advisory Committee Part L, Neil Morgan on how Passivhaus informed the Retrofit for the Future Competition, Sebastian Moreno from the Belgian Passiefhuis Platform and Liz Reason and John Walker from Passivhaus Buildings. Additional insight will be given from a variety of client groups.

Online registration will open in early March. Space is limited and early registration is advised.

More details at www.aecb.net

Passivhaus Buildings (PB) Launched!

In an exciting new development, we recently launched a subsidiary company, Passivhaus Buildings (PB). What we want from this venture, in a nutshell, is to bring about a step change across the industry and generate large numbers of low energy, low carbon developments throughout the UK. Modest enough objectives but we believe PB can take forward the success of Carbonlite by becoming a centre of excellence for low energy, low carbon buildings in the UK.

The new company will greatly expand our capacity for future coordination, delivery and dissemination of the CarbonLite programme and provide focused leadership. Working with partners, PB will become a focus for information, knowledge and skills in the field of low energy, low carbon buildings. PB is wholly owned by the

AECB, and will build on the huge base of expertise and experience within the AECB. We will, of course, keep you up to date with latest PB developments.

We Want Your Data - AECB Buildings Performance Database

Working with the Technology Strategy Board, AECB has developed the Buildings Performance database, an on-line database which displays information about the design, construction and performance of low energy buildings.

If you are designing, building or occupying a low energy building, why not upload and share your data? The information will be publicly available on the website with the aim of advertising and explaining the actual performance that can be achieved, the energy design standards in use, the construction methods, materials and equipment involved.

By uploading and sharing data, you will be helping to:

- Promote the AECB CarbonLite Energy Standards by detailing the low energy consumption which can be achieved across a large number of projects
- Enable prospective users of the standards to find a similar project
- Provide technical detail about the building envelope and mechanical systems which could guide the specification of a similar project

Please see <http://www.aecb.net/cbpd/cbpd.php> for more information. You will need to login first and happy uploading!

Zurich LAMA Awards Celebrate Ireland's Excellence

Best Eco Friendly Building: Navan Credit Union – Nominated by: Meath County Council, Submitted by: GAIA Ecotecture

This years Zurich LAMA Awards acknowledged the very best of Ireland's talent in local projects of Construction, Engineering and Infrastructure. Held in the Burlington Hotel Saturday January 30th, the Zurich LAMA Awards, now in its 4th year, saw key representatives from government, heads of local authorities, construction and the corporate business community attend to show their support of the many finalists. Mr. Michael Finneran, T.D., Minister for Housing and Local Services was delighted with the attendance saying "tonight's nominated projects pay tribute to local authorities, individuals and private sector organisations whose work contributes to the quality of life of our local communities. I'm especially pleased to see that the achievements of both local government and the business community have been recognised. This reflects the reality on the ground where the public and private sectors work successfully together to yield real benefits to local communities."

A full list of the Awards' winners is available at www.lamaawards.org.

The Greenshop Group Gets Greener

Following extensive carbon reduction work, the Greenshop Group has taken steps to offset their carbon footprint, becoming a "CarbonZero Company" through co2balance. The Greenshop achieves a carbon footprint of 1.34 tonnes per employee; the national average is around 3 tonnes per person

The move to become CarbonZero was the next natural step for the Greenshop, after instigating a raft of carbon reduction measures which includes a 4.6kw Solar PV System, high insulation levels, a large solar thermal array and a log boiler fuelled by waste wood. A wet room has also been provided for staff who cycle to work, and the Group has a policy of travelling by train for business trips to Europe.

The Greenshop is offsetting its carbon emissions through an energy efficiency stove project in Kenya, which reduces the amount of firewood that the family need to cook with. This saves carbon emissions as well as providing the family with a cheap, cleaner and easier way to cook.

In addition they are the National Winner of Cartridge World UK's Greenest Office 2009, which included offices of architects, law firms, engineering and construction companies.

For more information on the Greenshop Group go to www.greenshop.co.uk

UK World First Puts 12% Renewable Heat Target Within Reach

Government today published detailed consultation proposals for the world's first Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which will pay people for the heat they generate themselves. The scheme, which is due to start in April 2011, will lead to a rapid increase in the number of homes and offices heated by woodfuel, biogas, solar thermal, heat pumps and waste-to-energy technologies. This will be driven by the RHI guaranteeing that the average household will be paid well over £1,000 for the renewable heat they generate themselves.

Today, renewable heat technologies meet just 0.6% of UK heat demand, but by 2020 the government aims to meet 12% or more of the UK's heat demand through renewables. Demand for heat dominates energy use in the UK and is responsible for 47% of the UK's Carbon Emissions.

The scheme, known as the “Renewable Heat Incentive”, offers long-term, fixed payments based on the type of installation. There will be payments also for every unit of renewable gas fed into the gas network. This “biomethane” is chemically identical to North Sea gas (or Russian imports).

The RHI closely reflects the design recommendations of the REA, which won the enabling legislation for both the Renewable Heat Incentive and Feed-in Tariff for small scale electricity after a successful campaign with Friends of the Earth, 35 supporting organisations and strong cross-party support.

For more information go to www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/rhi/rhi.aspx.

The deadline for responses to this consultation is Monday 26 April

Eco-Towns To Rise From Modest Beginnings

Housing minister John Healey announced funding allocations to the four first-wave eco-towns this week in a move designed 'to help get these projects off the ground'. The £60m funding, which will support 600 new homes among other projects, was pledged last year when Healey named the four sites chosen to pioneer the beleaguered eco-town concept.

The money will be shared between demonstrator projects, rather confusingly described as 'eco-show homes', with around 500 new homes to be built on eco-town sites from next year and around 100 show homes to be built within existing communities. Nearly a third will be affordable.

The first modestly-scaled housing projects are expected to 'start' next month, though all of the parent eco-town masterplans have yet to negotiate their way through the planning system. In fact Cherwell Council will use some of the money to further develop its masterplan for North-West Bicester, one of the four pioneers.

Other projects to be supported include green travel hubs and facilities for electric cars and bikes, retro-fitted homes and community buildings and low carbon school buildings – the DCSF has added £2.5m to the funding pot.

Healey hailed the spending announcement as 'the start of the country's biggest ever eco-home building programme' and reaffirmed the government's expectation that the first four eco-towns will have 10,000 homes built by 2016.

However, the relatively modest pipeline schemes illustrate just how tentative the eco-town commitments are at this stage, with these heavily-subsidised demonstrator projects appearing to be part of the hearts and minds campaign still to be won at community level. Many are not located on the actual eco-town sites in any case. Early projects revealed by CLG this week include:

- North-West Bicester (Cherwell Council). Demonstrator project of 30 homes to be built on a regeneration site in the town centre, ahead of 200 new homes planned for the eco-town site; retrofitting of a 'large number' of properties in the existing town; an eco-standard sixth form for the Cooper School in Bicester; an exhibition home demonstrating the latest technologies built to PassivHaus standards.
- Whitehill-Bordon (East Hampshire Council). Between 70 and 200 new homes built on the eco-town site, with five homes to be built following an international design competition; conversion of a disused fire station into an 'eco-station'; retrofitting of town library and primary schools; low interest loan scheme for local householders.
- China Clay Communities (St Austell Council). Up to 37 affordable demonstrator homes to be built in the town centre; a retrofit display home in the town centre; multi-functional community hub to be run jointly with the Eden Project; a new bus station with bicycle storage and electric charging points; retrofit of ten existing properties.
- Rackheath, Norfolk (Broadland Council). Demonstrator project of 12 homes with biomass CHP in Rackheath ahead of plans for 200 homes on the eco-town site; repayable grants to local residents for upgrading of homes; trial of personal carbon trading scheme, the first of its kind, as part of the planned behaviour change strategy.

Healey confirmed in December that the government is supporting the development of a further nine second-wave eco-town proposals being drawn up by local authorities and their development partners. The government's long term aim is still to see up to ten eco-town developments built or well under way by 2020.

However with the zero carbon new housing regime due to be in place by 2016 and current eco-town requirements still permitting homes that meet only Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, Gordon Brown's eco-towns vision will start to look increasingly anachronistic unless homes can be built in volume within the next three to four years.

Source: RIBA Practice Bulletin no 531, 11/02/2010

Local Communities Go Green

Twelve local communities around the UK have been awarded up to £500,000 to install green technologies, while another nine local councils are working with the Government on carbon emission plans. The £6 million

investment as part of the Government's Low Carbon Community Challenge will help the 12 communities install carbon- and energy-saving technologies like solar panels, insulation and hydro turbines over the next two years.

Hook Norton in Oxfordshire, for example, will install a ground source heat pump for a local school, provide interest-free loans for the retrofit of six homes, insulate a further 40 homes and install solar panels in 20 more. Meanwhile, Easterside in Middlesbrough will install two wind turbines at a local school and fit 600 homes with energy monitors. A group of 12 villages in South Wales will also install two wind turbines to produce power for around 2000 homes.

Hydro turbines will be installed in Halton in Lancashire and Blaenclydach, a former mining village in Wales. Other communities to benefit include Ashton Hayes in Cheshire, Exmoor National Park in Somerset and Devon, Whitehill-Bordon in East Hampshire, a community in Cornwall, Ballymena and Glencraig in Northern Ireland and three villages in Pembrokeshire. Similar awards were made to another ten communities in December last year.

Meanwhile, nine local councils will work with the Government over the next year to trial new local carbon frameworks aimed at tackling climate change through home insulation projects, alternative sources of energy and making the most effective use of surplus energy. The councils in Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Oxford, Northumberland, the London Borough of Haringey, Nottingham, Plymouth and Bournemouth Poole and Dorset will set targets for reducing carbon emissions and develop a strategy and delivery plan for achieving those cuts.

Go to www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/consumers/lc_communities/lc_communities.aspx

Communities Should Get Together On Heating, Water And Waste, Says Report

Local communities should get together on heating, rainwater harvesting and waste disposal and reuse schemes, recommends the UK Green Building Council (UK-GBC) and the Zero Carbon Hub. A new report on sustainable community infrastructure recognises that these options can offer energy security and considerable carbon and cost savings.

The UK-GBC is calling on local authorities to develop sustainability plans to identify opportunities for community schemes, such as using waste heat from a new power plant or industrial facility for residential housing. According to a survey carried out by UK-GBC, over 70% of the general public are in favour of community energy projects and 90% would like to see more use of rainwater for flushing toilets and watering gardens.

The public sector should lead by example, says the report, and be required to connect to existing or planned community heat networks where available and viable. Marco Marijewycz of E.ON and contributor to the report says that the issues of affordable, sustainable and secure at the community level have been looked at in isolation for too long.

The acid test, however, will be whether the UK-GBC's recommendations are turned into viable community scale energy schemes, says director of the Zero Carbon Hub David Adams.

For further information go to www.ukgbc.org/site/taskgroups/info?id=12

New Social Housing Energy Cooperative Formed

Social housing organisations in the UK are forming an energy cooperative that could generate 250 MW of electricity and £20 million a year from small-scale renewable energy installations. The Horizon Energy Cooperative, the first such initiative of its kind in England, wants to develop a 'microgrid' of locally generated wind and solar power.

Participating social housing properties will host the generation systems and pool the energy produced – either selling it back to the grid to raise revenue or using it locally to provide electricity and hot water. Horizon also plans to offer a heavily subsidised social tariff for fuel poor residents, which make up an estimated 60% of those in social housing.

The partners in the scheme, Manchester-based EIC Partnership, Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and others, are currently seeking funding for the plans. The Cooperative Bank could be one prospective source, along with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

If an initial three-year pilot proves successful, EIC wants to look at a wider roll-out with the Government, with the ultimate aim as operating as a 'virtual utility'.

For more go to www.eicpartnership.com

Community Renewables Projects In Wales To Get £8 Million Boost

Community groups in Wales are to get access to £8 million to help develop local renewable energy projects. The Community Scale Renewable Energy Generation initiative, which was announced by the Welsh Assembly Government, is being supported with over £7 million from the European Regional Development Fund.

The funds will provide £100,000-300,000 to around 22 new and existing projects to establish community-scale wind, biomass and hydropower schemes. The electricity generated by the projects will either be used by the community or sold to the National Grid to provide an income source.

A further 135 small grants of £3000 will also be available to help communities undertake feasibility studies of possible renewables projects. Follow-up grants of up to £35,000 will be open to 35 schemes for the next stage of development. The scheme will be managed by the Energy Saving Trust on behalf of the Welsh authorities, with development officers identifying potential schemes and providing advice to community groups.

Go to <http://wales.gov.uk>

National Trust To 'Grow Own Energy'

The National Trust has announced that it plans to introduce 'grow your own' small-scale renewable energy schemes across its properties in a bid to reduce its energy use 45% by 2020. The organisation says it plans to install 50 new wood fuel boilers into its mansions and larger buildings over the next five years, along with solar panels, heat pumps, and hydro and wind generators.

As well as installing new measures, the Trust plans to reduce electricity and heating by 20% through improved efficiency. The move to more renewable sources of energy and improved efficiency will cut the Trust's use of fossil fuels by 50% within the decade. It could also lead to savings on the £6 million a year that it costs the Trust to power and heat its portfolio of 300 major historic houses, office buildings, visitor centres and 360 holiday cottages.

The Trust already has over 140 renewable energy schemes in operation, ranging from solar panels on the roof of Grade I listed Dunster castle in Somerset to a wind turbine at Middlehouse Farm in Malham, with a total capacity of 2.3 MW of heating and over 1 MW of electricity. Some of these initiatives have been supported by revenues from npower's National Trust Green Energy tariff, as well as from other sponsors and the lottery fund. But the Trust anticipates that most of the new schemes will break even within ten years.

The move by the Trust has been welcomed as a "brave and visionary step" by environmental group Friends of the Earth.

Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/, and www.ntgreenenergy.org.uk

Events

Fuelling The Growth Of Bioenergy, 17 March 2010

9.30am - 3pm, Genesis Centre, Somerset College, Wellington Road, Taunton

This free conference is targeted at anyone interested in or working in the bioenergy/renewable energy sector

The aim of this conference is to provide attendees with an overview of the current and potential future role of bioenergy in the South West and in particular, Somerset. It will focus on identifying current and future education and training needs in order to support its further development both in the region and in the county.

This is a free bioenergy conference because we value your involvement in the day, however, as there are limited places, anyone who books a place but doesn't attend will be charged £20.

For more information or to book contact Sally Gilby on 01823 366 455 or sally.gilby@somerset.ac.uk

Keeping The Roof On: A Realistic Guide To Retrofitting, 22 March 2010

Millennium Gloucester Hotel and Conference Centre, London

This event will be the definitive and honest guide on 'how to retrofit' and 'how to fund it'. It is the last opportunity pre-election to hear from those who are making decisions as well as practical advice from those who have already got their hands dirty:

- Learning from entrants of TSB Retrofit for the Future competition
- What works and what doesn't - from the pioneers of social housing retrofit
- How much it costs - and how we can pay for it
- How we can make 2010 a year where we make real environmental improvements to our homes

For more information please contact Natalie McGregor on 020 7067 1189 or nataliem@housing.org.uk

The Eco-Innovation Workshop, 15th April 2010

UCA Farnham, Farnham, Surrey – FREE event

There are growing market opportunities for companies that are developing and/or have developed innovative environmental products and technologies. Specific emerging opportunities include the development of 'zero'

carbon and 'net zero carbon' buildings in line with the Code for Sustainable Buildings, 'windows' for low carbon technologies related to advent of UK feed-in tariffs, smart metering and the greening of government procurement.

However there are many challenges in moving good ideas through prototyping, research & development to demonstration and commercialisation. This leaves many start-ups, inventors and existing companies left scratching their heads for answers.

The workshop is particularly aimed at companies with less than 250 employees based in the South-East of England that produce low carbon, resource and water efficient products/ technologies. Those that many be especially interested include CEOs, Managing Directors, Development Directors, Marketing Directors, Innovation Directors, Inventors and Consultants.

There is no charge for this event

Full details and registration form are at www.cfsd.org.uk/sids/ECOMIND/eco-innovation-workshop.html

14th International Passive House Conference 2010 28th and 29th May 2010 – Dresden

This year's event is set against the background of how energy efficiency, and the Passive House standard in particular, shows a way out of the economic crisis. Delegates will hear how regional governments are beginning to recognise how the Passive House standard can strengthen regional economies by increasing local investment, and strengthening the local building trade as competence is boosted.

There is a wide range of technical sessions whose titles include Energy Efficiency inside buildings - Electrical appliances suitable for Passive Houses; News from R&D: Building services and building envelope; Passive House - non-residential buildings; Solutions for the refurbishment of buildings worth preserving; Energy efficient construction in public space; Funding/financial support; Comfort and Health; Renovation using Passive House technology; Cost/benefit analysis; and many more.

There will be at least 3 AECB speakers the event: Mark Siddall of Devereux Architects is talking on "PassivHaus in the UK: Adding opportunity value" What are the challenges, and opportunities, arising from seeking to implement a PassivHaus project in the UK? He will be looking at the technical and regulatory challenges arising from the design and development of a housing project featuring 25 PassivHaus homes in the UK, and consider how these tasks and challenges may be turned into opportunities.

Alan Clarke and Nick Grant will present a paper on the importance of hot water system design in the Passivhaus, arguing that hot water system design deserves a similar level of attention to detail as building envelope design and ventilation systems.

Form more information go to www.passivhaustagung.de/vierzehnte/englisch/index_eng.html

Courses

Irish Passive House Academy – 10-day Passive House Designer Course, 8th March

The Irish Passive House Academy is holding its first 10-day European Certified Passive House Designer course, commencing on 8th March 2010. The cost of the course is €1,900 (VAT exempt), including catering. There is an additional fee for the exam.

CITA Skillnet has agreed to support each of the first 20 participants in this course (Irish residents only) to the value of €380 towards the costs. This funding is provided on a first-come-first-served basis.

The venue is the Irish Passive House Academy, County Wicklow.

There are still some places available – please check www.passivehouseacademy.ie for further details.

Becoming An Eco-Refurbisher, TGR Course, Manchester 18th March

Including the completed Great British Refurb Manchester Retrofit Project

The Green Register (TGR) is pleased to announce that it will be running one of its most popular courses in the North of England this March, which will include Kevin McCloud's Great British Refurb – the Manchester Retrofit Project.

The one day event entitled 'Becoming an Eco-Refurbisher' is being held at Manchester's MERCi Centre on Thursday 18th March 2010 and TGR has a great line up of topics and speakers in store for delegates.

Some recent TV programmes on 'green make-overs' might lead viewers to think that eco-refurbishments are all about adding solar panels and recycling bins. However TGR's expert speakers will explain that it is a more complex process which looks at the entire house and how it can be holistically improved.

This fascinating and comprehensive training course is designed to provide all the information construction professionals will need to advise their clients on sustainable refurbishment of their homes.

Participants will be registered on The Green Register's website under the 'Eco Refurbisher' listing, easily identifying them to new clients.

You can book places on all Green Register courses online by visiting our website at www.greenregister.org.uk

Forthcoming CarbonLite Training Course Dates

- The Essentials Of Passivhaus Design And Delivery – Understanding the Passivhaus standard, principles and methodologies

19 March 2010 - University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth

24 March 2010 - Park Crescent Conference Centre, London

This course is aimed at the design team who are new to low energy buildings and the use of the Passivhaus standard. It introduces the principles behind the Passivhaus standard and methodologies for a variety of building types and the use of the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) for achieving low energy performance. Attendees will leave with an understanding of the Passivhaus design and certification process and associated costs.

- Using PHPP In A Building Certification Process – Using PHPP to design low energy buildings

25-26 March 2010 - Park Crescent Conference Centre, London

This practical hands-on course will provide energy consultants, technical building designers and architects with the skills necessary to design low energy and CO2 buildings using the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP). Delegates will need to bring a laptop pre-loaded with a copy of the PHPP software for this course.

These courses frequently sell out and early booking is advised. For further information visit and to book please contact sally@aecb.net

Both London courses now bookable at www.carbonlite.org.uk/carbonlite/training.php

Publications

New Books From Earthscan.

The Whole Building Handbook: How to Design Healthy, Efficient and Sustainable Buildings

By Varis Bokalders and Maria Block, ISBN 9781844075232 (paperback) ISBN 9781844078332 (hardback)

The Whole Building Handbook is a compendium of all the issues and strategies that architects need to understand to design and construct sustainable buildings for a sustainable society. The authors move beyond the current definition of sustainability in architecture, which tends to focus on energy-efficiency, to include guidance for architecture that promotes social cohesion, personal health, renewable energy sources, water and waste recycling systems, permaculture, energy conservation - and crucially, buildings in relation to their place.

The authors offer a holistic approach to sustainable architecture and authoritative technical advice and the result is a comprehensive, thoroughly illustrated and carefully structured textbook and reference.

Designing High-Density Cities: For Social and Environmental Sustainability

Edited By Edward Ng, ISBN 9781844074600

Compact living is sustainable living. High-density cities can support closer amenities, encourage reduced trip lengths and the use of public transport and therefore reduce transport energy costs and carbon emissions. High-density planning also helps to control the spread of urban suburbs into open lands, improves efficiency in urban infrastructure and services, and results in environmental improvements that support higher quality of life in cities.

Encouraging, even requiring, higher density urban development is a major policy and a central principle of growth management programmes used by planners around the world. However, such density creates design challenges and problems. A collection of experts in each of the related architectural and planning areas examines these environmental and social issues, and argues that high-density cities are a sustainable solution. It will be essential reading for anyone with an interest in sustainable urban development.

Transport for Suburbia: Beyond the Automobile Age

By Paul Mees, ISBN 9781844077403

The need for effective public transport is greater than ever in the 21st century. With countries like China and India moving towards mass-automobility, we face the prospects of an environmental and urban health disaster unless alternatives are found. It is time to move beyond the automobile age. But while public transport has worked well in the dense cores of some big cities, the problem is that most residents of developed countries now live in dispersed suburbs and smaller cities and towns. These places usually have little or no public transport, and most transport commentators have given up on the task of changing this: it all seems too hard.

This book argues that the secret of 'European-style' public transport lies in a generalizable model of network planning that has worked in places as diverse as rural Switzerland, the Brazilian city of Curitiba and the Canadian cities of Toronto and Vancouver. It shows how this model can be adapted to suburban, exurban and even rural areas to provide a genuine alternative to the car, and outlines the governance, funding and service planning policies that underpin the success of the world's best public transport systems.

For more information go to www.earthscan.co.uk

Vacancies

Site Specific Green House Project: South Bristol Skills Academy.

Ginkgo Projects is working with the City of Bristol College to commission a designer / architect / artist to design a site specific green house structure which will be sited at the new South Bristol Skills Academy at Hengrove. The structure will be designed to be practical and innovative, reflecting interests in growing, sustainability, skills exchange and design integrity. A total budget in the region of £67k is available for the design and implementation of a structure with a floor area of approx 75m².

Expressions of interest are invited from practitioners who are willing engage with us to research new ideas that unite horticulture with architecture and design to provide an imaginative unique resource. Please see www.ginkgoprojects.co.uk/opportunities for more information.

Deadline for submissions: 10th March. Interview date: pm 17th March.

Opportunity For Volunteers!

Would you like to get involved with our award winning Low-Carbon Building Project? We need volunteers to help with a variety of jobs, particularly with wall construction, using strawbale, cobbing and rammed earth techniques. Training will be provided, and accommodation on site is available.

Hands –on volunteers are especially required during April and May 2010 to work during the main construction phase of the building.

Work on the project will be ongoing and from February 2010 there are opportunities ranging from making adobe bricks (from the local mud) to assisting the project manager with training/managing other volunteers, giving site tours to visiting groups, and helping with the day-to- day running of the visitor centre. Volunteers can spend from a few days to several weeks on the project and there may be an opportunity for a longer term placement.

The Othona Community is working with leading sustainable design specialists ZedFactory, to construct a zero-carbon building to provide accommodation and meeting space at its centre in Essex. The project, which won an award of £103,000 from The East England Development Agency's Cut Your Carbon Competition, is to construct a zero carbon building which is affordable, replicable and innovative, providing 6 bedrooms and a large meeting space.

The building will be constructed using mainly local materials (mud and straw) and is a passive solar design, requiring minimal energy use in it's lifetime, drawing maximum heat and light from the sun. Other features include a turf roof, composting toilets, rainwater harvesting, and creative use of reclaimed materials, from sinks, to stone flooring, to windows. The cobbing, earthramming and strawbaling techniques we are using have a very low environmental impact, but are labour intensive!

To apply for a place please contact Gail or Matthew Dell on 01621 776 564, or email clarestone74@googlemail.com

Details of the community are at <http://www.othona.org/>

If you have any news, events or courses you would like to publicise in Network then please email details to network@aecb.net, or post to Chris Lord-Smith, y Graig, Lliidiart-y-Waen, Llanidloes, SY18 6JT.