

**ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENT CONSCIOUS BUILDING
COMPANY NO 5336768**

**ANNUAL REPORT
COVERING PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 2005 TO SEPTEMBER 2006**

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INTRODUCTION

Chris Herring *AECB Chair*

I think we may look back at the year covered by this report as a pivotal one in the development of the Association. The year saw the formalisation and consolidation of structures within the AECB, together with major work designed to take the AECB's message out to a much wider audience. All of this was against a background of rapidly escalating awareness of the potential impact of human induced global warming and the increasing importance of these issues on the political agenda. In particular, the eventually delayed response from the UK Government in the form of the Code for Sustainable Homes was seen by many in the construction industry as having a key role to play in the environmental impact of the UK construction industry. As such it was expected to have a major impact on those such as the Association, already working in the field.

The beginning of the year saw the inauguration of AECB Ltd, and our move from voluntary association to limited company after several years of work to put the structure in place, and supporting votes at two AGMs in 2004 and 2005. While making minimal impact on our membership, this has put the Association in a far stronger position to take its work out into the mainstream.

During the year, the AECB started to build on the decision that its major focus had to be on energy use in buildings. A huge amount of work went into development of the AECB Silver and Gold Energy Standards together with consideration of how best to use these to support and develop the expertise of our membership in design and construction of energy efficient buildings. The result was the inauguration of the CarbonLite programme (CLP), designed to encompass development of the Standards, support our members and take this work out to the wider construction industry.

Some of the other developments during the year are outlined in this report, including publication of our 'in house' yearbook, a major uptake in use of the

AECB Forum and of course another fascinating conference, revisiting the completed Genesis project.

None of this would have been possible without the enthusiasm, commitment and sheer hard work of the Board, staff and other supporters and volunteers. Most of all, perhaps, it would have been impossible without our membership. I would like to express my appreciation to all who have contributed to the development of the AECB over the last year.

The environmental challenges we face are so huge that only with all of us playing our part are we likely to have the slightest chance of allaying a global catastrophe of quite unprecedented scale. As members of the AECB, we are privileged to be at the forefront of expertise, experience and commitment in putting forward solutions for the built environment. Now is the time to act. I hope that membership of the AECB can enable us all to act effectively.

AECB BOARD

The beginning of the year saw AECB Ltd take over the functioning of the Association. The steering Committee of the old voluntary association ceased to operate, and members were co-opted as Directors of AECB Ltd.

The new Board met 4 times during the year. All meetings were full day. It was found that the increasing activities of the AECB led to an increasingly packed agenda for each meeting. Increased use of sub groups and prior written reporting was used during the year in an attempt to enable the Board to get through as much as possible at each meeting. The minutes of each meeting have been published on the website.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The EO work programme continued to be managed by the AECB personnel sub group, with monthly phone conferences between the EO and the subgroup, written quarterly EO reports to the subgroup, followed by EO attendance at the quarterly Board meetings. Whilst the EO does not have a vote at these meetings, the Board has encouraged full EO participation in the meetings rather than a limited 'slot'. This ensures integrated discussion and generation of ideas at a time when the AECB has been developing and starting to deliver an ambitious work programme.

The activities of the EO were focused on:

- the EO continued to work with subgroups, members and others to explore and develop strategies for improving the financial future for the Association.
- the energy campaign, based around sustainable energy performance standards, continued with further development of the technical basis of the standards. The campaign effectively became a proposed programme, the 'Carbon Literate Design and Construction Programme', shortened to CarbonLite or CLP. As the programme was developed, associated work included ongoing elements of promotion, debate and discussion, lobbying, spin off research, fundraising, publicity and negotiation. Keeping abreast of developments and

attempting to integrate (through facilitating discussion and open sharing of work) continued to be an aim in this period. The core AECB team in this work was Andy Simmonds, Liz Reason and David Olivier, acting as the Energy Sub group. Additional members advising through the sub group and informally included John Willoughby, Peter Warm, Bob Lowe, Bill Bordass, and many others, including AECB members' input via the technical discussion forum.

- ideas and bids were developed for collaborative projects associated with the energy campaign.
- naturally letter writing, article writing and commissioning, reading key reports, keeping up with research findings, facilitation of consultants discussions, board member and sub group activities, staff and contracted services issues accounted for a good deal of the workload.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE June 2006

Genesis Project, Somerset College of Technology,
Taunton.

This was our second visit to the Genesis Project, which has now been completed and it provided an excellent and inspiring venue. As the building is so interesting we combined workshops and guided tours by the client and the architects. These proved very popular and all the workshops were well attended.

We asked members to fill in feedback sheets and these were closely scrutinised and a summary of the comments put on the web site. On the whole the view was that the conference was interesting and well organised with suggestions for future workshops and requests to not concentrate on venues in the south of the country.

Attendance was a bit lower than we had hoped and bookings were slow at coming in but all costs covered. We believe that it should be possible to increase the attendance and make a small profit for the AECB while at the same time offering excellent value for the membership.

Where it was feasible we put the presentations on the web site but quite rightly some presenters felt that their presentations were not designed to be stand alone documents and so they were not included. We must give thanks to all of those who gave a range of excellent presentations at no charge (we can only cover travel and accommodation costs). From the feed back we had from the workshop facilitators they seemed to appreciate having the workshops chaired so thanks to all those who chaired them.

The event ended with the AGM this year we had the added bonus (bribe) of a raffle open to those who stayed, it seemed to work as we had a good attendance.

It must be said that a lot of the success of the event was due to the venue, which was both very well run and a lovely space to be in. What the Genesis

Project proves is that if client ,architect and builder work well together they can end up with a building that everyone is proud of and happy to work in. Lets hope we can find a similar venue for next year.

SussED (Sustainable Skills and Education)

The AECB's SussEd initiative has temporarily scaled down its activities in the broader field of construction and sources of funding are being investigated. The emphasis is currently on energy –related training [see below].

ENERGY ACTIVITIES

Introduction

Energy has been an AECB priority since 2004 when the urgency of taking action on climate change became paramount.

Objectives of the energy campaign

- 1) to produce energy performance standards consistent with significant reductions in CO2 emissions from new homes;
- 2) to provide resources and training to help practitioners deliver to those standards;
- 3) to profile the Association as an essential source of expertise on the energy performance of buildings for policy-makers and practitioners.

Energy Performance Standards

Detailed specifications for two standards were developed – Silver and Gold, with CO2 emissions reductions of 70% and 95% respectively against the average. Discussions were opened with the EST [Energy Savings Trust] to use the AECB standards as the new Energy Efficiency Best Practice standards, with the addition of a Bronze standard (a 40% reduction) to bridge the gap between current Building Regulations and the Silver Standard.

Subsequently the EST dramatically reduced the standard, which led the AECB to undertake detailed analysis of the methodology used. The results of the analysis were published on the AECB web-site and issued to ministers and civil servants to coincide with an interview of Liz Reason on the Today programme [Radio 4] on Friday 19th February as part of a 4-day review of climate change policy. The report appeared to attack BRE's BREDEM, SAP and the Building Regulations tools rather than to draw attention to the shortcomings of the government's methodology for revising Building Regulations. It was therefore agreed that David Strong at BRE should respond to the AECB's paper on the AECB web-site.

A second draft of the original report, focused on the need to:

- i) monitor the performance of buildings so that policies for reducing CO2 emissions and revisions to building standards can be based on real data,
- ii) count all the energy uses in the home, not just those related to space and water heating and half the lighting,
- iii) ensure that all cost-effective measures to reduce energy demand are adopted in new and refurbished buildings before installing expensive add-ons

iv) explain the relationship between the AECB standards, Part L of the Building Regulations and the Code for Sustainable Homes.

This message has been explained to DEFRA and ODPM, as well as to EST, SDC, the RIBA, the Green Alliance and the Conservative Party's Quality of Life group. The reaction is almost uniformly that we should not try and change the current way of doing things "because it will upset the industry" and introduce more change than anyone can cope with.

Code for Sustainable Homes.

We submitted a response to ODPM's consultation on the Code for Sustainable Homes. We offered five energy performance standards for the five levels of the Code.

CarbonLite Programme

We have now developed the CarbonLite Programme (CLP), which is designed to offer all the tools to deliver against the energy performance standards. Applications were made to the Esmee Fairbairn Trust and The Carbon Trust to develop and manage the CLP with an expectation to receive funds in Spring 2007.

WEB SITE SUB GROUP

Webmaster Tom Anderson

Forum

This is the place for regular discussion, announcements, events, job adverts etc. The use of the forum continues to grow with a mixture of practical questions and answers and more philosophical and strategic discussion.

Member Profile

This feature is now live after a long time in development and was previewed at the 2006 AGM.

Members are encouraged to fill in company details so that potential clients looking for green building professionals can get a clearer idea of what is on offer. Members are encouraged to make clear claims about the actual environmental performance of their company and projects.

Smaller companies who haven't got round to developing a website have found the Profile to be an ideal alternative with the added advantage of the aecb.net excellent Google page rank. Companies with their own websites also benefit from the back-link from the AECB site when they have an active profile.

The membership search and profile is likely to be the main route for promotion of the membership.

Online Joining

This is expected to be operational in the Spring of 2007 and existing members will be able to renew on-line using a debit or credit card.

Other features

These can be seen by exploring the website at www.aecb.net

REGIONAL GROUPS

Joanna Saadi is building a network of Regional AECB Groups with a view to networking and sharing information at a local level. The first is to be based in the South East. Group activities are co-ordinated via the web site.

BOARD MEMBERS, STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

Trustees (Directors)

Chris Herring

Peter Wilkinson

Additional Trustees (Directors)

Chris Lord-Smith

Christine Armstrong

Cath Hassell

Geoff Stow

Liz Reason

Neill Lewis

Nick Grant

Paul Ellis

Peter Wilshaw

Sally Starbuck

Officers

Chair Chris Herring

Secretary to the Board Chris Lord-Smith

Treasurer Christine Armstrong

Company Secretary Peter Wilkinson

Officers and Staff

Executive Officer Andy Simmonds

Finance / Administration Sally Hall

Lobbying Officer Cath Hassell

Emails / telephones Chris Lord-Smith

Network newsletter Chris Lord-Smith

Auditors Keith Bridgford & Co Limited Company

Building Society Ecology Building Society

Bankers The Co-operative Bank