

# FX



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NOBU DUBAI  
CARVES ITS  
OWN NICHE WITH  
INTRIGUING DESIGN



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WHY DAVID  
ROCKWELL'S  
SIGNATURE HAS A  
THEATRE TOUCH



**PROGRESS REPORT**  
DESIGN CRITIC  
AIDAN WALKER  
GETS IN ON  
THE ACT EARLY



**ALL WHITE**  
ANNABELLE FILER  
HAS A MISSION  
TO BE WHITER  
THAN WHITE

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# Ecobuild's wake-up call

AS THE RECESSION HITS, THE TRADE FAIRS AND CONFERENCES THAT ARE SO VITAL TO THE DESIGN INDUSTRY BRACE THEMSELVES FOR A LOWER THAN AVERAGE TURNOUT. BUT AS FX DISCOVERED, ECOBUILD, THE SHOW DEDICATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, WAS ONE YOU COULDN'T AFFORD TO MISS

**N**o longer dismissed as the preserve of tree-hugging hippies, environmental sustainability is a concept that the world is finally waking up to. Dwindling natural resources and the threat of climate change loom large for individuals, governments and businesses alike. But there is plenty to do to cut waste and curb harmful emissions.

Since it began five years ago, Ecobuild has become the most important event on environmental sustainability for the design and construction industries. Last year's event went down a storm with visitors, and the buzz surrounding the show this year proves that that architects, designers and builders are really getting behind sustainability, despite the economic gloom. After all, by using products built to last longer, harnessing natural sources of energy, and reducing waste, businesses can save money while they save the environment.

More than 800 exhibitors brought the latest in sustainable products to Earls Court, while an excellent programme of seminars and conferences explored everything from installing solar panels to sustainable office renovation. Here's our pick from this year's Ecobuild.

**1 DULUX**  
Dulux Trade introduced its new Environmental Impact Analyser, a tool that measures the effects of products from 'cradle to factory gate'. The stand focused on long-lasting paint ranges Ecosure and Diamond, which reduce the need for frequent decorating and ensure that less paint is used over the lifetime of the building.



**2 HANSGROHE**  
In addition to its main stand, this specialist in high-performance showers, mixers and taps contributed eco-friendly appliances to The Zero Carbon House, by visionary architect Bill Dunster. The house kit, to be marketed as RuralZED, is a carbon-neutral house kit designed to meet Code 6, the highest level in the Government's Code for Sustainable Housing.

For homeowners committed to conserving water, Hansgrohe also provided a patented indoor grey-water recycling system, the Pontos AquaCycle 900, that takes grey water from the basin, bath and shower and recycles it for



use flushing the toilet, watering the garden and doing laundry and cleaning.

**3 ECOCANOPY**  
This modular building system designed by Bryden Wood Associates proved popular, and not just with those from the residential sector. Ideal for housing, the product, which arrives on site prefabricated, is also attracting attention for shops, schools and healthcare facilities.

**4 DESSO**  
Carpet manufacturer Desso unveiled its 'cradle to cradle' approach to manufacturing, inspired by a partnership between Desso and the Hamburg-based Environmental Protection Encouragement Agency (EPEA) pioneered by German chemist, Prof Michael Braungart. The concept is that all products produced by the company will be entirely recyclable. Desso hopes to produce the first 'cradle to cradle' carpet tile.



## ▶ THE ARENA:

The Arena was such a popular event at last year's show that the organisers didn't hesitate to bring it back. This year academic and commentator **Germaine Greer** asked 'Does eco have to be ugly?' while broadcaster and former MP **Michael Portillo** and architectural historian **Dan Cruickshank** discussed the behavioral changes that are required if we are to move towards a more eco-friendly future.

Plenty of useful advice was on offer at a series of seminars exploring everything from the installation of solar panels to the use of sustainable water. There was also an invaluable feature on keeping up with the raft of new regulations introduced in the name of environmental sustainability.

There were plenty of other attractions, too, including **Renew Commercial**, in which surveying and design consultancy GIA created a mock-up of a typical city-centre office to illustrate the key elements of a sustainable renovation project using simple, cost-effective methods.

The installation identified five steps – glazing, mechanical installations, lighting, insulation and interior fit-out – which designers, landlords and tenants can take to reduce a building's carbon footprint.

An array of solar-powered products was on show at **Solar City**, including photo voltaics (PV), building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV) and solar thermal panels. There was also expert advice on planning, maintenance and funding, from the manufacturers of solar-powered equipment Vaillant, Solarcentury, Schüco and Alpha Heating Innovation

Also scattered around the exhibition space were several **special interest pavilions**, including areas dedicated to sustainable construction, timber products, paints & coatings, precast products, interiors and biodiversity. **EX**

Star turns in events under the Arena banner were architectural historian **Dan Cruickshank (#1)** academic and commentator **Germaine Greer (#2)** and broadcaster **Michael Portillo (#3)**

## ▶ CONFERENCE:

An informative and insightful conference programme accompanied the main exhibition, with some famous names included among special guest speakers. There was plenty to talk about, too, from the effect of recession on environmental sustainability to the practicalities of reaching 'zero carbon' building targets.

As the economic downturn forces the design and construction industries into cost cutting, will environmental sustainability fall off the agenda? Newsnight's economic editor Paul Mason chaired the conference's first day, which looked at the effect of the financial crisis on construction. Discussions entitled **What price sustainability?** and **Turning red into green** showed that sustainability can be affordable and achievable, even in tough times.

BBC Radio 4 journalist and broadcaster Sarah Montague chaired the second day that explored the need for the construction industry to evolve if it is to be both 'green' and profitable. In **Sustainability beyond buildings**, the former construction minister Nick Raynsford joined Dr John Connaughton, of property investment firm Davis Langdon, and Michael Ankers, chief executive of the Construction Product Association, in arguing that coherent spatial

“Discussion forums ‘What price sustainability’ and ‘Turning red into green’ showed that sustainability can be affordable and achievable, even in tough times”

planning and infrastructure provision has to be judged by more than just a building's carbon footprint.

If the construction industry is serious about protecting our environment, it needs to look beyond new buildings to the ways in which refurbishment of existing buildings can reduce energy consumption.

In the final day of the conference, journalist and broadcaster Kirsty Lang chaired **Refurbishment rises to the top: a new focus on existing homes**. TV presenter and author Kevin McCloud joined The Guardian's economics correspondent Ashley Seager and chief executive of the UK Green Building Council and chairman of the World GBC international climate change policy group Paul King in highlighting the importance of refurbishment in 'green building'.

