



Shaping places  
that make a  
positive impact  
on people's lives

# Connecting people, places and the environment

We believe in the power of places to shape better lives for the people who use them - and are driven to deliver healthier, safer and smarter buildings and spaces that are friendlier to the environment.



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# Creating a positive impact on society and the environment

This social value report highlights achievements over the past year and the progress we have made in areas including: sustainability, diversity and inclusion, employee wellbeing, and within communities through our projects.

As a socially responsible company, we embed a culture of positive impact in all that we do. The Social Value Act guides all our actions and drives our commitment to social responsibility through our extensive work within the public sector. By connecting with the communities in which we work, we prioritise actions which will be valued the most to these communities, as well as our own team at AHR.

By formalising our commitment to social value, we can generate greater impact and have put in place three objectives to guide our actions.

- We champion a fair right to education for all
- We foster inclusive, accessible communities
- We support improved health and wellbeing

We are committed to providing opportunities for all, supporting our people with career development, inspiring young people and creating alternative routes into the industry. We generate positive change by sharing knowledge and engaging in open conversations with everyone we work with.

Every year, we continually strive to become a more inclusive organisation and we support a happy, healthy workforce. We celebrate diversity in all its forms and have implemented initiatives that promote physical, emotional, and financial wellbeing.

Sustainability is central to the ethos of our practice, focusing on three connected pillars, creating economic, social and environmental sustainability. Integrated into everything we do, together these pillars enable us to deliver unique, healthy and inspiring additions to the built environment, that leave the world better than we found it.

We are proud to share with you our journey towards positive change highlighting our achievements and progress in 2023 in this report and look forward to continuing the journey with you, towards a better, more sustainable future.



**Anthony Langan**  
Managing Director,  
Architecture

## Achieving social value is part of our wider focus on sustainability, because the future health, wellbeing, and prosperity of people is intrinsically linked to the quality of their environments.



**Allan Hunt**  
Managing Director,  
Building Consultancy

# Our commitment to sustainability is shared by everyone at AHR

We believe a more sustainable future starts with us, creating inclusive spaces that enhance the health and wellbeing of all who use them and improve long-term prospects for all.

Social value is a key part of our commitment to sustainability because the future health, wellbeing and prosperity of people are intrinsically linked to the quality of the places and environment they live, work and socialise in.

## Three pillars of sustainability



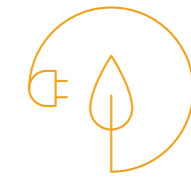
### Economic sustainability

We focus on delivering long-term, future proof solutions. By taking into consideration reuse, whole life costing, energy efficiency, and waste elimination, we shape places and spaces that will remain effective, efficient and desirable for generations to come. Wherever possible, we support local economies by prioritising the use of local materials, businesses and supply chains.



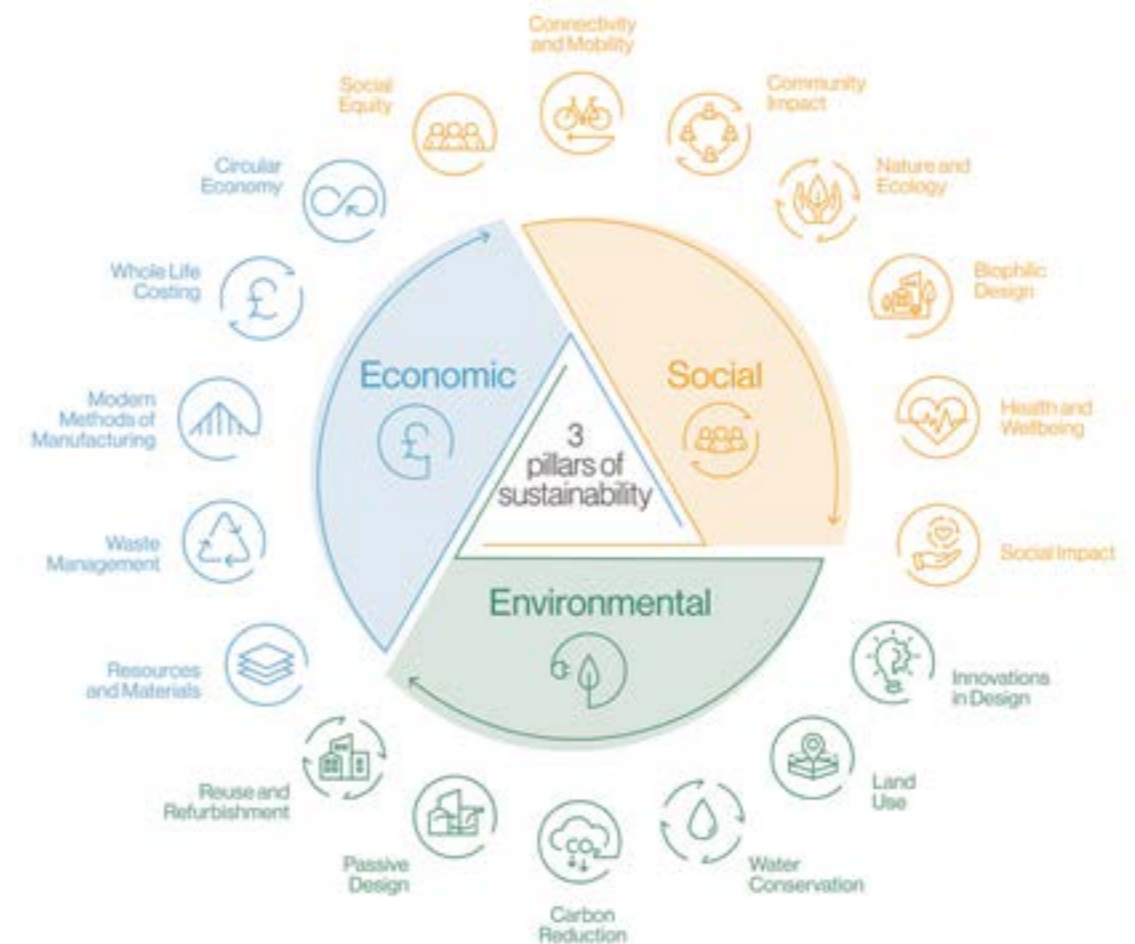
### Social sustainability

We provide a platform from which everyone involved in our projects can be heard. By engaging directly with local communities, as well as the people who work with and for us, we can fully understand their needs and expectations. Helping us to shape environments that promote inclusivity, improve wellbeing, and enhance long-term prospects – creating greater social value.



### Environmental sustainability

We are committed to minimising the footprint of our projects, by applying innovative design practices that promote a Net Zero Carbon future. In support of industry-wide change, we use science-based targets and recognised methods of measurement to demonstrate compliance, surpass sustainability standards, and drive innovation in this area.



# Our 2023 achievements at a glance

We create social value in many ways – through our projects, our external activities and partnerships, and as an employer.

This social value report highlights achievements throughout 2023 and the progress we have made across our three objectives.



Fair right to education



Inclusive, accessible communities



Improved health and wellbeing

## A summary of our achievements



86

work experience weeks with us on placement



£10,716

raised by staff for charity

47

work experience students supported

18

fundraising events undertaken

13

staff mentored to support achieving qualifications

18

charities supported

41

events with schools and universities

1

RIBA AHR Scholarship

62

hours mentoring university students

9

Apprentices supported

1

Visiting Professorship



55

social events organised

19

wellbeing champions

£372k

Total social value impact



# We champion a fair right to education for all



Our Communities

## Work experience

Every year, we provide work experience placements for students aged 15 and above, across the country.

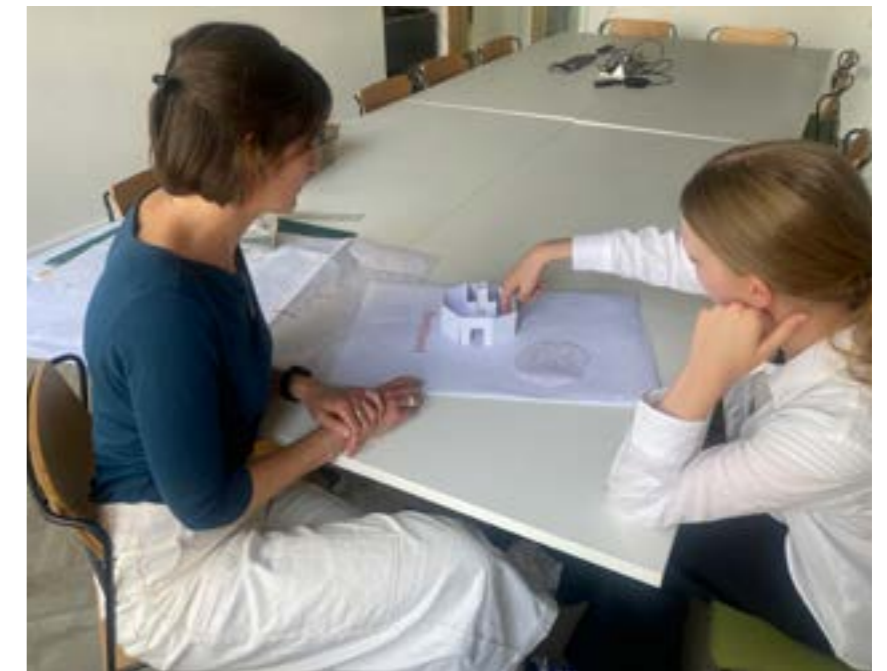
47

work experience students supported

86

combined work experience weeks with us on placement

As passionate supporters of equal rights to education, we strive to inspire future generations and are committed to providing better opportunities to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. By continually sharing insights gathered from our work, we also aim to promote the open exchange of knowledge in our industry.





Our Communities

## Engaging with students

Two local school students joined our building consultancy team in the Huddersfield office, for a week of work experience, learning from different departments within the practice. They spent time with our marketing team and had the opportunity to conduct a site visit and experience life first-hand as a building surveyor.

Two Year 12 Students carried out work experience in the Midlands for one week in June. The students created a £2m house design on a plot of land by the river in Shrewsbury including precedent research, schedule of accommodation, hand sketches and sketch-up design.

In July, five students from Redland Green Secondary School worked with our Bristol team for one week. They were taught how to use different architecture software, as well as working on a live project to create 3D models, finishing with a presentation about what they had learnt over the week to their fellow students and some of our Bristol colleagues.

A Part I student from the Mackintosh School of Architecture completed an 8 month university placement with our Glasgow office. During this time they accompanied us with another 5th year student, on a site visit to the Replacement Woodmill and St Columba's High Schools, set to be UK's largest Passivhaus education building. This visit gave them an invaluable lesson in sustainability and allowed them to see the scope and complexity of the scheme first hand.

[Read more about the project here](#)



**“I really enjoyed the whole process and I am so pleased with the project that we did, thank you so much for this opportunity I hope to be an architect soon!!”**

**Aleeza Smith**  
Year 12 student at Sandwell Academy who undertook work experience at our Shrewsbury office



Our Communities

## RIBA mentoring programme

Each year we partake in the RIBA Future Architects Student Mentoring Programme. Staff from around the UK mentor students from a multitude of different Universities.

Six students from Salford University came to our Manchester office and created portfolios, interviews, looked at projects, massing strategies, design concepts, presenting projects, reinforce what they do at university.

Throughout the year students from the University West of England, Plymouth University, Bournemouth University, Falmouth University and Cardiff University worked with a number of our Bristol team, over approximately 50 hours. Students experienced the day to day role of an architect, how inter-office working is achieved, as well as experiencing the social side of work.

72

RIBA mentoring hours completed

15

universities worked with

Our Communities

## Student mentoring

We work with educators to deliver talks, mentoring, careers support at a variety of different events, throughout the year.

Our building consultancy team in Huddersfield attended several C+K Apprenticeship events across Kirklees and Calderdale, speaking to Year 11 students about beginning a career in architecture or building consultancy.

We have a long-standing relationship with the University of West of England (UWE), having designed and delivered several major projects. Over 2023, Hira Teriney was and continues to be a regular guest lecturer at the university and has given lectures to students on Collaborative Practice and how we are supporting the university to achieve its 2030 Net Zero Carbon target. Hira was recognised as RIBA South West Architect of the Year 2022 and Project Architect of the Year for her contribution on the School of Engineering at UWE.

In Leeds, Gurminder (Gim) Sanghera, Manisa Mistry and Iulia Nazarin gave a tour of Nexus, the innovation and enterprise centre at the University of Leeds, to the Leeds Society of Architects and the Yorkshire Evening Post. Here they presented a talk on the building, explaining its technical delivery journey.

### Embedding sustainability in the practice of future generations

Director and head of sustainability, Robert Hopkins has a Royal Academy of Engineering Visiting Professorship at Cardiff Metropolitan University for Biophilic Design and Sustainability.

Rob joined the university in the 21/22 academic year and will work with the university over three years. As part of the scheme Rob delivers one lecture a month to 2nd year Architecture, Interior design and Construction design and technology students, across a range of relevant topics. Rob also worked with the university to develop their carbon literacy programme.

Our Communities

## RIBA AHR Scholarship

As part of our commitment to support inclusivity in the profession, we have been running the RIBA AHR Scholarship programme since 2008.

The scholarship supports students from low-income households with a work placement, mentoring with an AHR architect throughout the year and a £6,000 bursary to assist them with course and living costs throughout their Part II studies.

In 2023, our 2022 RIBA AHR Scholarship recipient, Reem Taha Hajj Ahmad completed her scholarship. Reem is an architecture student at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL and completed her 4-week work placement in our London office, paid at the real living wage. She was mentored throughout by director, David de Sousa.

“It was a nice experience to be in touch with the industry while studying because sometimes these are very separate. During my work experience my mentor David was helpful in putting me in touch with people who are specialised in different topics, which added greatly to my university work.”

Reem Taha Hajj Ahmad  
2022 RIBA AHR Scholarship recipient



[Hear about Reem's experience here](#)

“The scholarship will be invaluable for my personal and professional development. I am excited for what the next two years hold and look forward to seeing how my connection with AHR can positively affect the research and design work I complete in Cambridge.”

Nuala Moya Durkin  
2023 RIBA AHR Scholarship recipient



Our People

## Apprenticeships

We embrace a culture that values knowledge sharing, consistently supporting our colleagues with life-long learning, progression and collaboration and are proud to support routes to employment via different routes.

Our apprenticeships provide a gateway to embark on meaningful career journeys, supporting them with the skills and knowledge to thrive in their chosen fields. By offering people a paid opportunity to learn in a live working environment, we can give them invaluable experience in their chosen careers and gain skills that they will carry with them throughout their lives. We can attract a rich, diversity of candidates, with different perspectives, helping us to shape an inclusive workplace and inclusive, accessible communities.

In 2023 we provided apprenticeships across the country in architecture and design and drafting.

[Hear from some of our apprentices here](#)





Our People

## Developing new skills

We support our team in Continuing Professional Development and attaining their CPD points during the year.

This helps in their personal development and achievement of career aspirations. It's also important for our practice that our architects and building surveyors are not only trained, skilled and knowledgeable; but they can apply this to the safe design and operation of buildings. We recognise how important this is as legislation and standards evolve.



Our Work

## Knowledge sharing

We thrive on collaboration and understand first-hand how sharing knowledge and combining diverse perspectives help generate positive change.

Across the year we took part in numerous events that were attended by people representing disciplines beyond architecture and surveying; from construction and planning to developers and asset management.

### Building Safety Act Conference

A conference for people looking to develop their knowledge of the new Building Safety Act legislation, David de Sousa and Thomas Jones shared their experiences of it and implementing it into our Buxton house residential project.

### UK Passivhaus Conference 2023

As part of the UK Passivhaus Conference, associate director and certified Passivhaus designer Jamie Gregory, led a guided tour of our Replacement Woodmill and St Columba's High School project on the Dunfermline Learning Campus site. He also delivered a presentation on the school on the second day of the conference.

[Read more about the project here](#)

### Chartered Institute of Housing 2023 Conference

Our team attended the leading event for the residential sector to meet industry professionals, joining their peers in how we can provide positive change for the people we provide housing for.



### Education Estates Conference and Learning Places Scotland

Focusing on the funding, design, build, maintenance and management of schools, colleges and universities, the event showcased some of the most innovative solutions around and celebrated excellence in the sector.

### Sharing insights within the healthcare sector

Regional director and head of healthcare, Gareth Banks, is passionate about working together with professionals across the industry, in order to develop innovative solutions to the challenges the healthcare industry faces. Keen to drive initiatives and share his insights within the sector, Gareth is also Secretary of Architects for Health (AfH), an organisation dedicated to improving the quality of our healthcare environments.

Throughout 2023, Gareth attended many healthcare events with AHR and AfH, including the European Healthcare Conference 2023, IHEEM Healthcare Estates Conference and IHEEM Wales Regional Conference. He also attended the European Health Property Network where he was a key contributor to the panel discussion, themed around 'Innovation in planning, design and technology'.

Our Work

## Decarbonisation roundtables

Throughout the year, we ran a series of knowledge sharing events, in Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and Liverpool, **Achieving decarbonisation: The challenges and opportunities in retrofit.**

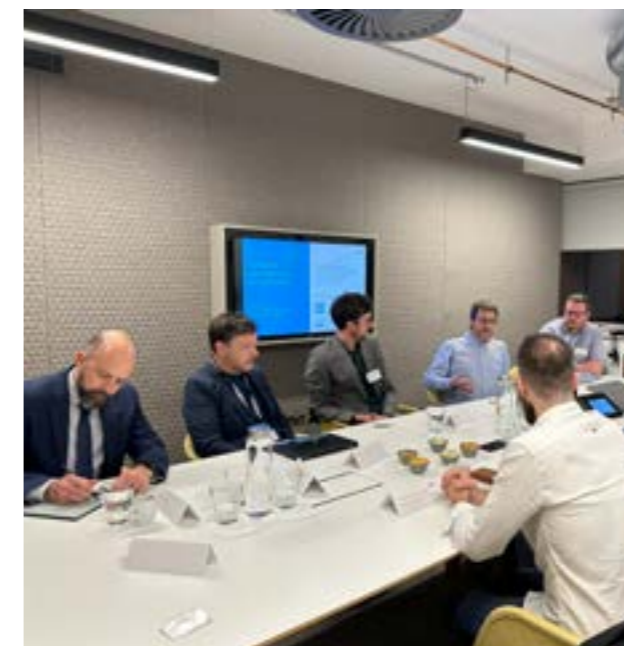
The events were highly successful driving interesting conversations and providing the opportunity to learn from and share insights with experts from across the industry. Recurring themes surfaced across the country, emphasising the importance of bridging knowledge gaps, collaborating across sectors and the need to embrace a cultural shift for successful decarbonisation.

But in each location discussion there were certain nuances which brought to light the particular challenges faced regionally. Panellists in Cardiff highlighted the significance of early sustainable education adoption and the integration of technology and innovations into the mainstream.

Our Manchester panellists discussed that as an industry we need to empower sustainability champions and prioritise sustainability within our projects in order to meet customer demand and to be eligible for banks funding decisions.

In Liverpool the challenges in retrofitting existing building stock were brought to the fore and it was noted that the Return on Investment on sustainability interventions cannot always be measured financially.

The topics discussed in Birmingham were led by our strong presence in the office and workplace market in the Midlands. Occupier influence is driving sustainability in our projects and as occupier behaviour evolves, businesses need to rethink their estates, aiming for efficiency and reduced energy consumption.





Our Work

## Recognised Awards

Insider North West Property Awards 2023

**Architectural Practice of the Year - Winner**

Our innovative approach to 'transforming existing buildings' with judges' appreciation of our regeneration project, Chester Northgate.

Michelmores Property Awards 2023

**High School Leckhampton Education Project of the Year - Winner**

Our 900 place secondary school offers a positive and inspiring learning environment, with the building embracing sustainable design principles whilst blending with its beautiful natural surroundings.

Our Work

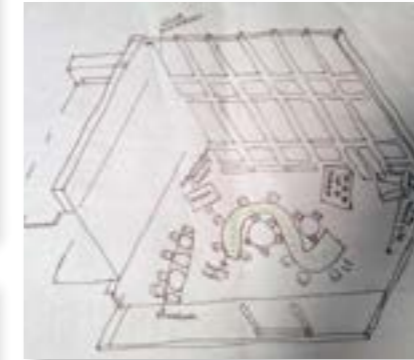
## Our projects

### Pudsey Grammar School, Pudsey

Pudsey Grammar School is oversubscribed and running beyond capacity. The school's leadership is required to use breakout spaces as full-time education spaces, in addition to the designed classrooms.

In order to ensure that all young people in the surrounding local area have a fair right to the best education possible, there is a new 134 place Post-16C teaching block proposed to be built at the school. Our building consultancy team are delivering consultancy and technical survey services for the new teaching block.

Colleagues from our Huddersfield office visited Pudsey Grammar School to speak with students about the proposed developments on their campus. We presented plans for the new teaching block and students were very enthusiastic, providing us with feedback for what they would like to be included in their study spaces. They then created sketches of their own ideas for the development.



### Winterstoke Hundred Academy – Expansion, Weston-Super-Mare

Winterstoke Hundred Academy – Expansion Academy is a new secondary Net Zero Carbon school, with a current capacity of 900 places, but with the potential future expansion to 1200 places, to serve the needs of the growing surrounding community.

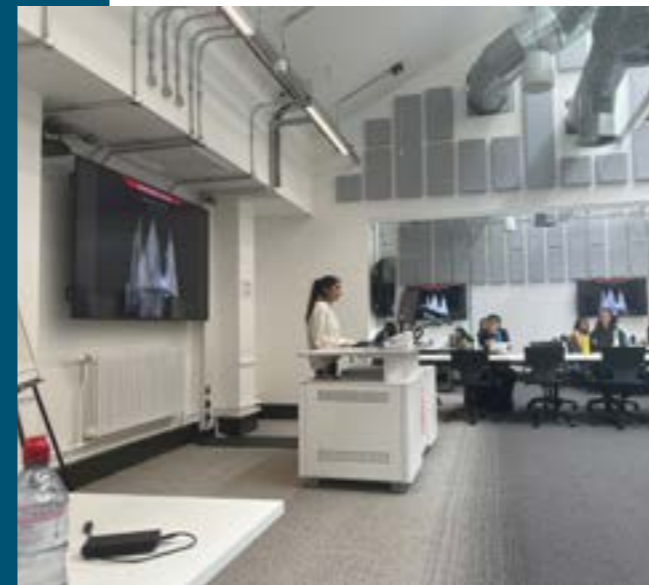
We have designed the school to have a positive effect on wellbeing for the staff and students, with daylight throughout the building, bright, light atriums and views to the landscape beyond from all teaching spaces. We have created a welcoming school environment, promoting physical and mental health and a positive impact on sleep, mood and academic performance.

As well as providing students with a welcoming, relaxing space to learn in, the facilities are also intended to be used by the community outside of school hours. The sports facilities and the main halls are available for community events and performances, positively impacting the wider community.

Throughout the development of the project and now as the school is open, we are dedicated to social value and ensuring that we provide opportunities which will benefit the local community. In August, two architects from our Bristol team, Frances Coble and Ashley Kirk took a student from Cardiff University on a site visit to the school. The student was interested in the role of an architect, seeing how a project progresses through RIBA Stage 5 (Construction), and the different activities which occur on site. She also enjoyed visualising how our drawings translate into the physical rendition of our design.



# We foster inclusive accessible communities



Our Communities

## Speakers for Schools

Through our ongoing partnership with Speakers for Schools we have reached young people at schools across the country, leading Discovery Workshops in a range of topics across Architecture and Building Consultancy, for students aged 14-19.

Speakers for Schools is a registered charity committed to supporting young people through helping them secure work experience placements and inspiring talks to fuel their ambition.

By working with people from all cultures and backgrounds, we shape a society where everyone feels heard, is equally supported, and is able to flourish. We are continually becoming a more representative organisation, who delivers places that encourage diverse communities to thrive.



# 11

student events with Speakers for Schools



Our Communities

## Inspiring future generations

We provide amazing opportunities for young people across the UK as we continue our journey to create a more inclusive profession.

### Pathways into the industry

Three Part I and II Architectural Assistants, Elisha Bergin, Eva Kilpatrick and Bethany Stewart, visited Loreto College in Hulme, Manchester. Here they delivered a talk to Sixth form students centred around entering the profession, drawing from their current experiences.

Charlotte Bebb and Iliana Miteva-Sawyer from our Shrewsbury team attended a careers fair at the Mary Webb School and Science College. Aimed at Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils, Iliana and Charlotte gave a presentation about a day in the life of an architect and different gateways into the industry.

In Leeds, architects Sara Burgess and Iulia Nazarin, gave an afternoon talk to Year 7 and 10 students at Dixon's Unity Academy in Leeds about a career in architecture.

### Careers conventions

Business development director, Jonathan Thacker attended the annual Careers Convention at Beckfoot School in Bingley, joining over 70 representatives from 40 different organisations. He enjoyed spending the morning speaking to students interested in careers in architecture and building consultancy.

Members of our building consultancy team attended Park Lane Academy's Careers Convention in Halifax. Hosted annually, the event is attended by a range of external suppliers and aims to help inspire Year 11 students to find a career to pursue on leaving school. Olivia Thompson, Carlos Gomes and Matthew Walker attended the event and spoke with students about working in architecture and building consultancy, providing them with information about the different routes available to the students.

### Ashton Park School architecture workshop

As part of their annual career day, our Bristol colleagues attended this event alongside volunteers from across Bristol. The team ran a workshop with Year 9 students honing their creativity skills and focused on the students developing a new architectural project in South Bristol.



Our Communities

## Volunteering our skills and expertise

As architects and building consultants, we have an opportunity to use our expertise and share our skills to enhance the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of the people who use our places and the communities we work in – making a positive contribution to social, economic, and environmental issues.



### Smart Works

Smart Works are a UK charity that supports unemployed women from a range of backgrounds and age groups, giving them the confidence they need to reach their full potential, secure employment and change the trajectory of their lives.

Associate director, Geoff Goodman, provided pro-bono architectural services to the charity to help them establish a location in Manchester City Centre.

### Kingsgate shopping centre

Our Glasgow team is working with Fife Voluntary Action who support, develop and represent community groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and volunteering opportunities in the region. Together, we are fitting out a shop unit, to create multi-agency client-facing hub, with interview rooms and a meeting room, which can be used for citizen's advice, charities and community groups.

### Honley Library

Honley Library is a local, community library in Holmfirth, open since 1936 and in 2013, was under threat of closure due to financial constraints. With the charity, Friends of Honley Library, our building consultancy team are providing design and planning application support free of charge.

Initially our geomatics team carried out a Scan to BIM survey of the library, which has then informed further works to improve accessibility, maximise natural light and provide an extension with a dedicated meeting space, kitchen, WCs and storage facilities.

Our Communities

## Fundraising

We support the best interests of the communities we work with. Dedicating time to local projects, activities and charities.

### Earthquake Appeal

Following the February 2023 earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, we ran companywide fundraising events including pancake day, bake sales and ad hoc donations. Together we raised £2,024 in donations then matched by AHR, resulting in a total of £4,048.

### Macmillan Coffee Morning

Each September, across our offices we get together over cake and conversations for Macmillan Cancer Support. As well as a way to raise money, these events are always an opportunity for us to come together, showcase our baking talents and shed light on the work Macmillan does every day, to give people affected by cancer the support they need.

### Supporting local charities

As well as our bake sales for Macmillan Cancer Support, we also ran bake sales to raise money for Bristol Pride, Caring in Bristol and Endometriosis UK. We donated food to local food banks, books and Christmas gifts to the Wood St Mission. Director, Andrew France volunteered with Uniform Exchange to sort through the donated clothes, folding and tagging them ready for drivers to collect and deliver to families across the Kirklees.

Our building consultancy team in Bristol took part in a Stand Up For Safe Water Paddleboarding event in support of Frank Water Projects. Frank Water is a charity dedicated to providing safe water sources and tackling the impact of the climate crisis.

### Christmas Jumper Day

Across the practice we dug out our best (or worst) seasonal clothing and took part in Christmas jumper day, raising £268 for Save the Children.



Our People

## Equality diversity and inclusion

We are working to become a more diverse workplace that is more representative of the communities we work for.

We are committed to creating an inclusive culture where everyone is welcome and able to be their true self, promoting diversity and inclusion within our team and the wider industry.

Our dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group, drive our commitment to EDI and this runs throughout our entire employee experience – from recruitment to career development. Guided by EDI champions from across all of our offices, the group meet throughout the year to ensure that we are maintaining, reviewing and updating our policies and initiatives.

Our Bristol office is a testament to our commitment to EDI. Director Karle Burford is a leading member of our EDI group and is a signatory on the Steering Panel of the Bristol Property Inclusion Charter, the first city-wide property inclusion charter in the UK. Karle sits on RIBA EDI panels, keeping up to date with the best practices in EDI and influencing key decisions on a national level. He also provides equity mentoring for students from the University of the West of England, ensuring that they have the best opportunities available to them at the start of their careers.

Last year, we enjoyed coming together for different festivals across a variety of faiths and religions, including Eid, Diwali, Easter and Christmas with food, talks and fun activities. By celebrating diversity in all its forms, along with the uniqueness of our colleagues, we unlock creativity and innovation, as well as better reflecting the communities that we work in.

Our People

## Learning culture

We embed culture of learning and support our team in their respective professions and career aspirations.

By paying for professional memberships, our people benefit from the rolling programme of events and CPDs they run, enhancing their existing skillset and giving them the opportunity to develop new skills.

Across the practice we also use an e-learning platform, Pinnacle Series, which hosts a wealth of training resources such as CPD resources, specific software advice and training videos, personalised to each person's role.

We engage with expert suppliers to provide specialist training in a number of different fields and technologies so that our team remain at the forefront of the industry, as well as ensuring quality assurance across the practice. As well as training in specialist technologies, we also provide training in the more functional aspects of work such as management, conflict avoidance, giving and writing appraisals and health and safety. This ensures that our practice is a safe, happy and harmonious working environment.



Our Work

## Our projects

### Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital, Shrewsbury

This major hospital project will revolutionise healthcare in the region, providing state-of-the-art medical facilities in a patient-focussed environment. The project was envisaged to fulfil the Trust's goal of offering acute medical care in one location and this service change represents the needs of the local community. Improved accessibility to services was a key driver and integral part of the design.

We have rationalised entrances to reduce confusion and created a unified central space, assisting with wayfinding and providing a central hub of information for patients and visitors.

The design recognises the diverse needs of the building users throughout. To understand the complex needs and operations of all the departments on site, we conducted extensive stakeholder engagement sessions and site analyses. By designing with people with neurodivergent needs in mind we have created an environment which is harmonious, comfortable and attractive to all. Spaces are patient-focused and respect the need for privacy and dignity through all stages of care.

Our interior design team have carefully considered accessible wayfinding solutions, as well as integrating art and furnishings which can make a genuine positive contribution to healing.

[Read more about the project](#)



### Rotherham Town Centre Regeneration, Rotherham

We are working as part of a multi-disciplinary team to transform Rotherham town centre. This regenerative masterplan will revitalise the town centre, providing new opportunities for growth, jobs, economic development and will bring life and activity to this formerly neglected area.

As part of the regeneration, we are replacing a former derelict nightclub, with a mixed use development of apartments and commercial space. This will bring more homes to the area, as well as spending opportunities and will positively enhance the overall aesthetic of the area.

We will preserve the former Grade II Listed Guest and Chrimes foundry and brass, keeping the heritage of the area whilst refurbishing it to create a unique new cultural offering. We will incorporate a new music and events space, promoting community events.

Riverside quarter is our transformational, residential led masterplan bringing much needed homes to the area, accommodating the future growth of the town centre. Responding to the site's constraints, we have developed a range of bespoke house typologies which include a mix of innovative back to back and flood resilient houses, with contemporary apartments, to suit a variety of residents.

Our redevelopment of the Rother Valley and Thybergh Country Parks will create vibrant green spaces, available to host outdoor events. These will provide areas for the community to exercise, relax and enjoy the outdoors, improving their health and wellbeing by forging strong connections with nature.

Together with Rotherham Council, we are working to create a sustainable community and positively impacting the health and wellbeing of people in the area.







# We support improved health and wellbeing

Just as sustainability is a fundamental part of the built environment, we believe so too is the concept of wellness. As advocates of healthy, responsible, and sustainable practices, we are committed to shaping places that support and improve people's physical and mental wellbeing.



Our Communities

## Sustainability Champions

Embedding sustainable development principles is at the heart of our practice. We do this, not only in our own work, but collaborate with the rest of our industry so that collectively we can work together to leave the world a better place.

**Positively contributing to regional growth**

Part of the Leeds Property Forum Steering Group, director, Gim Sanghera is Chair of the Sustainability Group.

The group supports Climate Action Leeds, a collaborative programme with an aim to create a zero carbon, nature friendly, socially just Leeds by the 2030s. Gim also attended a Design for the Green Transition roundtable event with Arup and the Green Design Council.

Director Karle Burford alongside business development manager, Natasha Woods, is also part of the First Thursday Property Club and both are members of the Forum for the Built Environment.

These are knowledge sharing groups which provide updates on the latest and future developments of the construction market in the South West.

Our People

## Supporting colleagues

Our team of 19 Wellbeing Champions and two mental health first aiders provide a listening ear, signpost support available and work with the business to identify wellbeing benefits and initiatives that our employees will value.

**Mental Health Awareness week**

Coping with anxiety guide and a lunch and learn webinar on managing anxiety, local activities organised by the wellbeing champions in each office including; breakfasts, lunches, walks, yoga, and meditation and team board games.

**Help@hand new medical health and wellbeing support service**

Our people now have access to a health and wellbeing app, Help@hand, which includes an employee assistance programme and medical support services. With mental health consultations, medical appointments, financial and legal guidance and an Employee Assistance Programme, with a 24/7 helpline.

**Managing stress and heavy workload webinar**

As part of Stress Awareness month we ran a webinar including several strategies to manage a heavy workload and how to identify stress.

**Menopause policy**

We have created a menopause policy in order to create a supportive working environment and promote awareness and understanding that our team will experience a range of significant life events during their careers.

**Benefits update**

In recognition of everyone's hard work and to ensure that they have adequate time for rest and relaxation, we increased everybody's holiday entitlement. People also have the option to buy additional holiday if agreed upon within their team.

Our People

## AHR Away Day

In July we enjoyed a company-wide away day at the University of Warwick, with colleagues from across our nine UK offices.

This was an opportunity for some people to meet their colleagues for the first time face to face.

We played many team building games, which saw us collaborating with our team mates, all in the spirit of friendly competition. Despite the inevitable British weather, everyone enjoyed the chance to get outside in the fresh air, surrounded by nature.

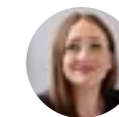
**“It was great to see so many people from across our UK offices come together for the first time in a long time. Everyone’s energy and enthusiasm truly made it a fantastic day and evening.”**

**Sharon Armstrong**  
Human Resources Director



**“I didn’t know what to expect when it came to the afternoon squid games but they were all great fun! I enjoyed the ones where we had to help each other out, like guiding blindfolded team members around! It was amazing to see everyone cheer on their teams and getting into the competitive spirit. Even if you weren’t playing, you couldn’t help but get caught up in the excitement.”**

**Tara Mitis**  
Associate





Our People

## Social Activities

Our regular breakfast socials give our people the opportunity to catch up and enjoy a selection of delicious, nutritious food to prepare them for the day ahead.

Colleagues in our Manchester and Bristol offices learnt the power of moss walls in creating interesting green ambience in public areas and had a great time designing their own, in a workshop delivered by Leaflike.

Our Glasgow team got competitive as they took part in a Lego team building event in which teams were tasked with building towers, bridges, landmarks and even portraits.

A visit to the climbing centre The Depot gave the Leeds team the opportunity to enjoy a new activity whilst working out, releasing stress and improving their focus.

Following the success of the Mental Health Awareness Week walks, our Huddersfield team visited the scenic Yorkshire Dales and went on a walk around Malham Cove.

The team in London planted strawberries in the sunshine in the garden on their rooftop, which they picked and enjoyed throughout the year.

Each year we hold an annual Sunflower growing competition, encouraging everyone to enjoy the outdoors and to connect with nature.

In winter, our team in the Midlands enjoyed ice skating in Birmingham, before riding the big wheel and enjoying some drinks whilst warming up.



Our Work

## Our projects

### School of Health and Society, Salford University, Salford

The new building for the School of Health and Society at Salford University will include clinical grade spaces for teaching Podiatry, Prosthetics and Orthotics, Sports Rehabilitation, Physiotherapy and Gait Analysis.

In time community healthcare clinics will also take place in the school. Many of the people who come into contact with the clinic will be experiencing challenging health circumstances and may feel vulnerable. Therefore, it was essential that we developed a design which was as inclusive as possible. In 2023, we conducted extensive stakeholder engagement sessions, to ensure that we developed a design which met the needs of all the potential users of the building.

Over six weeks, we presented to and held workshops with over 4 groups, made up of different operational departments from within the University of Salford. These sessions helped to determine the spatial and service requirements of all potential building users, the best layout option for each of the space types, which facilities each department required amongst other options.

Due to the potential vulnerability and additional needs of users, using biophilic design and WELL building standards as guidelines, our design seeks to generate the conditions and context for reducing stress, anxiety and promoting healing.

Throughout the design, consideration has been given to incorporating social prescription, equity of access, neurodiverse needs and trauma-informed design.

The clinics will also play a key role in tackling health and social inequalities by providing public services on site, reducing waiting lists and increasing accessibility of community services. (01)



### Woodmill and St Columba's High Schools, Dunfermline

The replacement Woodmill and St Columba's High Schools will inspire exceptional learning in a building set to be the UK's largest Passivhaus education building. Sitting within the Dunfermline Learning Campus masterplan, the highly sustainable 26,666 m<sup>2</sup> building demonstrates Fife Council's commitment to sustainable education design, promoting learning now and in the future.

To meet Passivhaus requirements, the building is designed to a stringent set of criteria to ensure maximum comfort with minimum overall energy consumption. Orientated to maximise natural light throughout, our design creates a comfortable and stimulating environment, supporting students to reach their maximum potential by increasing their productivity and motivation throughout the day.

This also increases student's connections with nature, which in turn can improve learning outcomes. We have carefully selected interventions that will ensure that energy costs are kept to a minimum, whilst pupil and staff health and wellbeing is prioritised.

This is the first education building of this size that is built to target the Passivhaus standard. As such, it is a model of education design across the UK and serves as a tool to educate the local community and future generations of students about sustainability.

Through various events, we have shared the challenges and opportunities which have arisen in designing a Passivhaus school of this scale and lessons learnt from this project. As part of the UK Passivhaus Trust Conference 2023, associate director Jamie Gregory, led tours around the project and delivered a presentation on the project. We have also conducted visits to the site with the local community and students in the area. (02)

# Continuing our social value journey

As we reflect on the significant progress made in 2023, we take pride in our achievements that have enhanced the health, wellbeing and prosperity of the people who use our places and the communities we work in.

We look forward to continuing to build upon our three objectives, through 2024.



Fair right to  
education



Inclusive, accessible  
communities



Improved health and  
wellbeing

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