Technology Strategy Board
Driving Innovation

Retrofit for the Future

Project final report

Cover note

This report was prepared by the collaborative project team for this Retrofit for the Future project, to provide fuller context on their experiences and the particulars of their retrofit's specification, construction and occupation.

The authors were encouraged to include honest, transparent and constructive comment, garnered from multiple perspectives across their team. All views are taken to be an accurate account from the time.

There may have been further modifications to the property after this report was produced. It is therefore possible that a small minority of statements will no longer be valid.

Although minor modifications have been made to this report by the Technology Strategy Board, these were only to ensure the privacy of individuals, including the residents, and compliance with the Data Protection Act.

This report may contain links to other websites, such as for project partners or the retrofit project. The Technology Strategy Board is not responsible for the content of those websites.

This report has already proven to be a valuable source of information for the technical and cost analysis reports published by the Technology Strategy Board which are available at: www.retrofitanalysis.org

Retrofit for the Future Project Final Report

Project number: ZA630V
Property number(s): TSB046

Author: ECD Architects

The work reported here has been funded by the Technology Strategy Board under the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) under the Retrofit for the Future programme. This project is one of nearly 90 projects funded under the programme. Further information on the programme can be found at: www.innovateuk.org/retrofit

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Driving Innovation

SBRI Government challenges. Ideas from business. Innovative solutions.

Final Report

Project information

- **ZA reference number:** ZA630V
- **Location of property:** Crawley, RH11
- **Lead participant details:** ECD Architects, Studio 3, Blue Lion Place, 237 Long Lane, SE1 4PU, www.ecda.co.uk
- **Date report issued:** October 2012

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1. Project details and directory

Role	Organisation	Contact Details
Project Lead		
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Property Owner		
Crawley Homes	Crawley Homes	Town Hall The Boulevard Crawley West Sussex RH10 1UZ 01293 511803 www.crawley.gov.uk
Design Team		
Architect	Energy Conscious Design	Studio 3, Blue Lion Place, 237 Long Lane, SE14PU 020 79397500 www.ecda.co.uk
Engineer	Carter Clack	49 Romney Street, Westminster London, SW1P 3RF 0207 233 0303 mail@carterclack.co.uk
QS	Keegans	Studio 2, 193-197 Long Lane, London, SE1 4PD 0207 199 0900 www.thekeegansgroup.com
Contractor		
Main contractor	Wates Living Space	Town Hall The Boulevard Crawley West Sussex RH10 1UZ 01293 438317 www.wates.co.uk
Sub-contractor – electric	Woodlands PH	2 Buckwins Square, Burnt Mills, Basildon, Essex. SS13 1BJ 01268724300 www.woodlandsph.co.uk
Sub-contractor - heating	British Gas	PO Box 4805, Worthing, BN11 9QW 07769 54252 www.britishgas.co.uk
PV installer	Solar Technologies/ British Gas	Unit 29, Romsey Industrial Estate, Greatbridge Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 0HR 01794 830154 www.solartechnologies.co.uk
Supplier - windows	Green Building Store	Heath House Mill, Heath House Lane, Golcar, Huddersfield, HD7 4JW 01484 461705 www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk
Supplier - internal Insulation	A Proctor Group	A Proctor Group Ltd, The Haugh, Blairgowrie, Perthshire PH10 7ER, Scotland 01 250 872 261

		www.proctorgroup.com
Supplier – external Insulation	Rockwool	26-28 Hammersmith Grove, London, W6 7HA, 0845 241 2586 www.rockwool.co.uk
Micro CHP supplier	Baxi	Brooks House, Coventry Road, Warwick, CV34 4LL 0844 871 1525 www.baxigroup.com
Heat Recovery Ventilation	EnviroVent	EnviroVent House, Hornbeam Business Park, Harrogate, HG2 8PA 01423810810 www.envirovent.com
Intelligent Heating Controls and monitoring equipment	Wattbox Ltd	The Techno Centre, Coventry University, Technology Park, Puma Way, Coventry, CV1 2TT 07974936215 www.wattbox.com

2. Introduction

Crawley was one of the original eight new towns around London aimed at getting people to move from the over-crowded capital into the countryside. To get such massive housing expansion off the ground, the Government-appointed development corporations often looked to exploit the programme benefits of non-traditional forms of construction such as timber frame and pre-cast or in-situ concrete. Crawley saw a number of sites developed using these systems in the 1950s and 1960s, which still exist today and are now managed by Crawley Homes, on behalf of the Borough Council. This project focused on one such housing archetype – the Wimpey No Fines Unit - and established a complementary and replicable set of measures which significantly reduce energy use and CO2 emissions associated with this particular form of dwelling. It is intended that the findings will inform the remainder of Crawley Homes' similar properties and will also be widely applicable to other social landlords or building owners with similar stock.

Our approach to energy saving and CO2 reduction was to follow a lean-clean-green hierarchy: seeking to minimise heat losses from the property's thermal fabric and ventilation method; to supply residual space and water heating using replicable, low carbon technology; to minimise lighting and appliance energy loads; and finally to consider micro-generation using proven renewable energy systems.

3. Occupants

The same tenants – a family of three - occupied the property before and after the retrofit. During the work they were decanted into a void property owned by Crawley Homes nearby.

4. Dates

Event	Date
Project start date (when was the first proposal discussed or agreed)	01/05/2009
Planning application submitted (if appropriate)	n/a
Planning permission granted (if appropriate)	n/a
Building Regulations application submitted (if appropriate)	09/08/2010
Building Regulations approval granted (if appropriate)	22/09/2010
Contract for work let / signed	
Occupants moved out (state if they remained or property was empty)	
Start on site	
Completion of retrofit	18/08/2011
Occupants moved in	18/07/2011
Monitoring system commissioned and operating properly	August 2011
Building defects corrected	August 2011
Building services and controls operating correctly	August 2011
Other key dates? (please add more lines as necessary)	End of DLP - October 2012

5. Pre-retrofit property

No-Fines concrete is the most common form of non-traditional construction and consists of 10 inch thick external walls rendered with cast in-situ no-fines concrete. Pre-cast reinforced concrete lintels were used over openings with dense reinforced concrete eaves beams. These properties often have problems with rain penetration and the corrosion of embedded steel. The only effective treatment for upgrading thermal performance is to overclad the dwelling with a system that incorporates insulation. This project therefore proposed to utilise the Rockwool Rockshield (aka EcoRock) system of insulated render to a thickness in the order of 200mm to achieve advanced practice external wall U-values.

Although this project focused on a particular construction archetype, the package of measures is actually widely applicable to any similar property that is architecturally suitable for overcladding, has solid floors and is served by mains gas, whether of solid brick, non-traditional or cavity wall construction.

Approximately 300,000 Wimpey No-Fines houses were built across the UK in the post-war period and a high proportion of these property types still remain to this day. Built as part of the Crawley New Town development, modern day Crawley Homes has 114 such units, out of a total management stock of over 9,500 properties in the town, including over 8,100 rented homes and over 1,450 leasehold properties. This property (TSB046), built in 1952, is a typical 3-bedroom property of this type, with a floor area of approximately 75 m² and one of 77 similar properties in Crawley Homes ownership.

6. Design

Our approach to energy saving and CO2 reduction is to follow a lean-clean-green hierarchy: seeking to minimise heat losses from the property's thermal fabric and ventilation method; to supply residual space and water heating using replicable, low carbon technology; to minimise lighting and appliance energy loads; and finally to consider micro-generation using proven, renewable energy systems.

The package of measures proposed to achieve these targets included Rockshield external insulation and render system, Rockprime blown stonewool loft insulation, aerogel-backed laminate flooring, PassivHaus-standard, triple-glazed timber windows, doors with integral insulation, humidity-responsive heat recovery ventilation with a retrofit airtightness strategy, a Baxi Ecogen micro-CHP boiler, Wattbox intelligent controls and user interface, LED lighting throughout, A+ (or better) rated appliances and roof-mounted photovoltaics. This package clearly encompasses a comprehensive 'whole-house' approach to the retrofit competition.

ROCKSHIELD/ROCKPRIME INSULATION. External wall insulation comprising 200mm of vapour permeable stone wool insulation finished with a silicone render coating will allow any moisture within the existing structure to migrate freely through the overcladding whilst improving the thermal fabric to give a U-value of 0.15 W/m²K. At ceiling level, Rockprime blown stonewool insulation will be installed to a depth of 420mm to achieve a homogenous insulation layer that achieves a U-value of 0.1 W/m²K

AEROGEL FLOOR INSULATION: Spacetherm thermal laminates provide unrivalled performance for thickness, with a thermal conductivity of 0.013 W/m²K. Spacetherm C allows floor insulation values to be substantially increased, quickly and simply, with minimal loss of space.

PASSIVHAUS WINDOWS: Certified by the German Passivhaus Institut, the unique design of ENERsign® windows and doors offers some of the most advanced performance in the world. It offers among the lowest U-values anywhere, with a whole window Uw-value of 0.65 W/m2K and glazing Ug-value of 0.53 W/m2K.

MECHANICAL VENTILATION with HEAT RECOVERY: The energiVent Q brings new levels of energy efficiency and innovation to the concept of heat recovery ventilation. The system offers a number of innovations: vapour tracking controls and inlet valves; intelligent, energy saving zone controls; DC motors; wireless remote user interface; 5 year filters; and a modular design allowing greater ease of installation. The system is SAP Q approved.

MICRO-CHP SYSTEM: In harder-to-treat properties, it may not be possible to achieve advanced practice levels of fabric heat loss reduction, therefore the need for an easily replicable efficient form of heating remains. The Baxi Ecogen unit uses a free-piston Stirling engine to provide around 6kW of thermal output for space heating and hot water while generating up to 1kW of electricity per hour that can be used in the home. Field trials and laboratory testing have indicated savings of 1 tonne of CO2/yr with this technology.

INTELLIGENT CONTROLS: The Wattbox controller is a newly developed control system which monitors and learns residents' occupancy. The innovative step is in monitoring house electrical consumption to learn occupancy from which, the controller anticipates and times space heating. Similarly, it monitors, learns, controls and optimises hot water heating so excess is avoided. It replaces the timeclock and thermostat with simple 'more/less' heat buttons.

LED LIGHTING: LED lamps offer significant advantages over compact fluorescent lamps: they are 90% efficient; offer significant energy savings; last nearly four times as long; do not contain mercury and phosphor in dangerous quantities; and can be recycled at the end of their life. We anticipate entire dwelling lighting loads of less than 150W with a predicted lifespan of around 20 years with this technology.

7. Construction

The works were undertaken via the existing TPC 2005 (amended 2008) Contract, under which Wates was delivering the Crawley Decent Homes programme. This was convenient and obviated the need to set up a special contract for the TSB Retrofit for the Future projects.

Wates appointed a dedicated site manager to the projects who supervised all site activities, ensuring that the works were carried out safely in accordance with activity-specific risk assessments and method statements.

Scope was organised into subcontract delivery packages and orders placed with a general purpose building contractor (GPBC) and specialists. The GPBC used direct labour and subcontractors to carry out stripping out and demolition, groundworks, roofing, alterations to building fabric, installation of airtight membranes and tapes, floor insulation, dry lining, internal doors, sanitaryware, fittings and decoration.

Specialist contractors were employed by Wates to install:

- External Wall Insulation (EWI)
- Loft insulation
- External doors and windows
- Micro CHP, central heating and plumbing
- Photovoltaic panel micro energy generation (PV)
- Loft access hatches
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery
- Intelligent building monitoring and control system

Materials and products were procured by Wates from manufacturers and suppliers nominated by the architect.

Tenants were temporarily re-accommodated as the extensive internal works were too

disruptive to permit their execution whilst the homes remained occupied.

The structure of Wates' delivery approach was generally successful and the utilisation of the Decent Homes contract enabled quick and effective mobilisation. However, coordination of the contractor's works interfaces was a key area of the operation which could have been managed better. With hindsight, it would have been beneficial to take time at the start of the job to call all of the contractors together in workshops to gain clear and mutual understanding of the objectives of the project and the limits and interfaces of each other's activities. This is the contractor's major lesson learnt.

8. Commissioning and occupancy

External Wall Insulation (EWI)

Proprietary External Wall Insulation with thin coat render finish was applied to walls. This is a highly effective method of insulating walls with minimal disturbance to residents and none to internal finishes.

As doors and windows were being replaced, the normal EWI retrofit difficulties of extending cills and compromising reveals were not an issue. Similarly, eaves overhangs were sufficient to accommodate the extra wall thickness, obviating any alterations to the roof. Rainwater pipes were altered to new positions.

The only minor disadvantages this installation brings is the difficulty in fixing to thin coat render over a non-solid backing and its sensitivity to impact.

Loft Insulation

400mm of Rockwool insulation was blown into the loft. This was an easy and very effective installation.

Floor insulation

Existing concrete floors were insulated by over-boarding with plywood backed with aerogel high performance insulation. This is a very effective means of insulating the floors with minimal impact on building fabric. However, it was a significantly disruptive exercise and required the residents to vacate during installation.

Retained existing doors had to be undercut to accommodate the additional floor build-up. This lowered door heads and altered proportions of panelled doors.

Doors and Windows

Triple glazed, high performance doors and windows were supplied and installed by a small specialist supplier which struggled to maintain programme during and after the job.

The doors and windows are very heavy and require complicated safe handling methods which are not always available on small, single sites.

Whilst they function very well, they are not suited to cheaper forms of construction as a retrofit installation. The required structural opening modifications in the panellised walls were

very difficult to achieve.

There have been many maintenance issues, including seals dislodging and misalignments. Adjustment is complicated but with the instructions provided in the manuals, normal maintenance crews should be able to manage. The misalignments may have been a matter of settlement and may never re-occur. However, they should be monitored.

Baxi Ecogen Boilers

This cutting edge micro CHP unit is largely prototypical and as a first generation has had its teething problems.

These boilers are extremely heavy, requiring a specialised rig to handle them. They are designed as a wall-mounted unit needing very solid supporting structure.

As they are micro CHP machines, generating electricity with their Stirling engines, installers require MCS accreditation in addition to GasSafe and IEE qualifications and special training from Baxi. At the time of these installations, there were very few fully qualified Ecogen installers and British Gas, the installer, struggled to provide the appropriate personnel.

A generation meter registers the amount of energy generated by the system.

Despite its thick, acoustically insulated casing, the Ecogen is a noisy boiler. When the engine is working, its noise can be heard throughout these small homes.

The onboard controller, which appears to be very sophisticated, is currently over-ridden by the Wattbox intelligent building monitoring and control system. Consequently, tenants have no experience of using it.

The project would have benefited from greater post-sales support from Baxi.

The Stirling engine has recently failed.

PV

British Gas Solar Technologies (BGST) designed and installed the PV array with little disturbance to the roof.

This generates free electricity for use in the home during the day. A generation meter registers the amount of energy generated by the system.

BGST were very good at the initial and installation stages but post-installation support could have been improved.

Airtightness membranes and tapes

It is essential before installation that all details have been thoroughly developed and that operatives are trained and briefed on the importance of perfect seals and junctions to components and fabric.

This is the part of the installation which would have benefited most from the contractors' workshop mentioned in section 7.

Loft Access Hatches

These are made by Welhoeffer in Germany and supplied by Green Building Store. They were marketed as being airtight but failed badly under test.

There was a lack of effective support from both companies and requests to inspect installations on site were rejected. A video of the installations was sent to them and they supplied replacement latches when excessive play in the original ones was noted. This had little effect on performance. The problem appears to be the build quality and tolerance generated by chipboard construction with too small seals.

Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery

The systems were supplied and installed by Envirovent, a small company which struggled to provide support service.

The ductwork installation of this kind is very difficult to 'thread' through structure in a retrofit application and this was the greatest challenge for this installation. Final balancing and commissioning of systems took a long time and the convolution of ductwork complicated this exercise.

Residents have complained of inadequate boost function on bathroom extract.

LED Lighting

LED lighting is fitted across the ground floor.

Tenants initially perceived levels to be too dim but have become accustomed to them.

There is an issue of compatibility with piercing airtight membranes during installation but this can be overcome with careful detailing and special enclosure to the fittings.

Wattbox intelligent building monitoring and control system

There have been some teething problems with this equipment along with a lack adequate support.

The system comprises a remotely monitored central computer with outstation sensors located at various positions around the home and on equipment to read room and equipment temperatures. Its objective is to learn the habitual energy usage patterns of the occupants and optimise control of the home's energy systems to provide the most economical run times.

Wattbox communicates to the central monitoring station via a SIM card and the sensors are powered by batteries. Signal strength varies between locations and is unreliable. Batteries frequently run flat and until they are replaced, the sensors do not function and 'error' messages are flagged on the home display.

Residents have complained that the system does not seem to have learned their behavioural patterns and they frequently do not have hot water when they require it.

9. Costs

This project was procured as a composite group of 4 projects within Crawley Homes' ownership. The costs identified for this project are illustrated as accurately as possible, and whilst this project is over budget the composite group were on budget. This was achievable by economies of scale across the schemes.

The 4 projects batched together were:

- ZA586R
- ZA592C
- ZA630VZA631J

Item Stage>	Design stage Materials and labour	Post-construction Material and labour	Comments
Management and administration	15,000	15,000	
Design			
Construction overall	102,425	122,295	
- Prelims	10,537	11,000	
- Fabric measures	13,182	13,182	
- Building services (conventional)	3,510	3,510	
- Low /zero carbon technologies	24,859	24,859	
- Consequential costs	N/A	N/A	
Occupant temporary housing	N/A	N/A	Accommodated in a Council owned void property
Monitoring equipment	9,500	7,600	
Monitoring and reporting service	Incl.	Incl.	
R&D costs (please detail)	N/A	N/A	

Below are the design/ feasibility stage estimated costs:

CONSULTANT SERVICES - £15,000 + VAT: We have considered the breakdown of the consultant team involvement in the next stage and envisage the following services to come from ECD and their sister companies, Keegans and PPCR:
- Liaison with Planning Officer and achievement of detailed planning consent
- Prepare Schedule of Works/Outline specification and detail drawings
- Confirmation of Contract Sum, to be carried out by Keegans QS
- Project Manager, to be carried out by Keegans PM
- Site visits and inspections plus diary/blog of progress
- QS site services, incl valuations, certification, final account negotiations etc to be carried out by Keegans QS
- Final production of SAP/PHPP analysis plus EPC certificate and production of Home User Guide
- M&E co-ordination role (lighting, ventilation, heating, monitoring and PV system layouts) and Str Eng input
- Tenant consultation/interviews/report over 24 month monitoring period (in conjunction with PPCR)

CONTRACTED WORKS - £102,425.72 + VAT: These figures summarise a summary breakdown of the subcontract packages plus the main contractor's preliminaries, overheads and client contingency.

- Fabric insulation measures, Rockwool/Walltec	£13,182.98
- Replacement fenestration, Green Bldg Store	£27,324.90
- MicroCHP/HRV/Photovoltaic array, British Gas/Baxi/EnviroVent	£24,859.00
- Ceiling works	£2,765.00
- LED lighting supply, GreenLED	£3,510.04
- Supply of appliances, various	£3,159.20
- EST monitoring	£7,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	£81,801.12

+ 12.5% preliminaries/overheads + 8% contingency + 17.5% VAT

ADDITIONAL MONITORING - £2500 +VAT: This sum covers the additional cost of the TVOC monitoring and the testing/monitoring of the thermal blinds installations.

DECENT HOMES FIT-OUT WORKS - Funded by Crawley Homes and undertaken by Contractor, these are separate to the TSB funded works.

10. Wash-up meeting

A wash-up meeting was held on the 17th August 2011 and was relevant to the four properties carried out by Wates on behalf of Crawley Homes. All aspects were discussed (both positive and negative), covering the following areas:

- Boilers - Baxi Ecogen
- Wattbox
- LED Lighting
- Doors and Windows
- Airtighness tape
- MVHR
- Loft Hatches
- Flooring Insulation
- PV
- Practicalities
- Void Properties
- General Items
- Contract
- Programme

This wash-up meeting was attended by:

Crawley Homes
Wates
Keegans
ECD Architects

11. Doing it again

The key learning points from the retrofit are considered as follows:

- **Contractor skills** – although generally not an issue on this retrofit project (as mentioned before there were issues with the airtightness results on the four properties in which Wates were involved), the project did flag up the need for more investment and training in skills related to retrofitting techniques to enable retrofits to become more commonplace. The retrofitting of insulation and air-tightness in particular were areas where specialist knowledge/skills are required. Although Wates have been involved in retrofit projects before, the team involved in the Crawley projects were new to the principles and were working as an adjunct to the Decent Homes programme. However, the project reflected their own environmental ethos and they valued it as an opportunity to be involved and to up-skill their staff.

- **Supply of materials** – long lead-in times required for ordering and delays in delivery for

some products caused significant knock-on delays to the completion of the retrofit. For example, the door was specified by a number of the Retrofit for the Future projects and this seemed to exacerbate the delays that were experienced with this product. This highlights the need for a more efficient supply chain if large-scale retrofits are to be undertaken. There has also been a delay in rectification of certain items as the specified suppliers are generally of a smaller scale, with specific interest in the retrofit market.

- **Resident engagement** – resident involvement from the outset was key to the successful realisation of the project and for the resident to buy-in to the retrofitted property. The tenants were key members of the project team from the start of the project and were consulted on every aspect of the design and construction.

- **'Simple' technology** – however simple the technology is to use, steps must be taken to ensure that the resident is comfortable on how to use it. The Wattbox is the only high-tech equipment that the residents have to use as a result of the retrofit, to control the temperature of the house. It is simple and intuitive to use; however, there have been various occasions when an error message has been displayed and the tenants have been unsure of what to do.

ECD have been involved in the design and management of thirteen R4tF projects and have employed a wide variety of technologies across a number of house types with nine client bodies and seven different contractors using a number of different procurement routes. Our learning from this process includes the following:

- In order to ensure best value all projects should be tendered. The Retrofit for the Future process encouraged contractor partnering; however, this proved to be of limited value as most of the specialist knowledge and support provided at design stage was sourced from specialist manufacturers and sub-contractors.
- Provide as much detailed information at tender as possible. We provided a standard specification and suite of details across all of our projects which were adapted to suit the technologies installed.
- Obtain as much relevant site/ building information as possible from the client before construction (including asbestos surveys).
- Liaise closely with the site agent as he/ she will be critical in ensuring site quality is maintained. If possible allow input from a fully trained clerk of works on a weekly basis to ensure that site agents are following drawings and maintaining quality.
- Deal with vacant properties first so that the lessons can be learnt on each property type before tenants are exposed to potential delays.
- Ensure that where named/ nominated sub-contractors are included their performance is monitored. For example the installation of Micro CHP units by British Gas has generally been poor resulting in delays to the main contract.
- Supply of specialist materials needs to be carefully managed and understood at the outset of the job to avoid potential delays.

ECD are involved in a number of ongoing retrofit projects and are employing the lessons learned from the Retrofit for the Future programme.

12. Business benefits

This project has used a number of innovative technologies which the project team hope to use on more mainstream projects over the next few years.

Networking with specialist suppliers has also increased the team's skills and understanding of the technologies involved and potential opportunities. This has led to new work within the retrofit market and hopefully further opportunities in the future for low-carbon retrofit and refurbishment.

An increasing awareness of the need for retrofitting existing housing stock has illustrated that an increasing percentage of works within the retrofit sector will be necessary over the next 5 years.