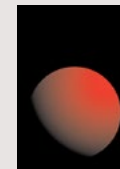


UK Architects Declare Practice Guide → 03 → Climate Justice



UK Architects Declare
Climate & Biodiversity
Emergency

UK Architects Declare Climate and Biodiversity Emergency

Practice Guide 2026

UK Architects Declare

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Architects Declare was launched as a not-for-profit organisation in the UK on 30 May 2019. Since April 2024 UK Architects Declare is a registered charity. At the time of publication, it has over 1,424 signatories in the UK. It is part of Built Environment Declares, which is now represented in 27 countries around the world.

www.builtenvironmentdeclares.com

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03 Climate Justice

This document has been created by an Architects Declare working group to help signatories convert their declaration into meaningful action and build momentum within their practice. The guide is intended to be a live, working document that helps fulfil the fourth point in our 12-point declaration by encouraging the sharing of knowledge and research on an open source basis. We expect this guide to evolve and be refined in future iterations as our understanding of the climate and biodiversity crises develops, and as our industry innovates to find new solutions to these challenges. We encourage our signatories—and other architectural practices or built environment practitioners—to contact us with feedback on this version and examples for the next version.

Throughout the guide we have referenced projects, suppliers, methods and frameworks which our contributors have experience of. We included these specifics to help clarify our intention but encourage practices to do their

own due diligence on specific services. We have contacted the practices and initiatives featured in the guide to request permission to reproduce their work. If we have missed any, please do get in touch so that we can resolve this in future versions of this Guide.

This is section 3 of the guide focusing on Climate Justice, please read in conjunction with all other sections of the guide

The Architects Declare Practice guide would not have come to light without the contribution, kind help, and guidance of an enthusiastic group of volunteers, and excellent feedback from expert reviewers. We would like to acknowledge and thank all:

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Ramboll [p.19](#)
London Borough of Newham [p.20](#)
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1 Climate justice

1 <https://arb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Architects-Code-of-Conduct-and-Practice.pdf>

2 <https://www.riba.org/media/hdlp0w20/code-of-professional-conduct-1-april-2021pdfpdf-1.pdf>

Social and climate justice must underpin everything that we do. Justice has long been at the forefront of civil society efforts to realise more just societies, however, only in recent years has it begun getting the attention it deserves in the architecture and built environment industry.

[ARB code of conduct](#)¹ and [RIBA code of professional conduct](#)² emphasise the architects obligation; ARB Standard 2 to work in the ‘public interest and in a way that supports the environment and prevent harm to others’ and RIBA Principle 3 for ‘members to seek and promote social justice’.





2 Declaration

The following point relating to Climate justice was added to the Architects Declare declaration point in 2021:

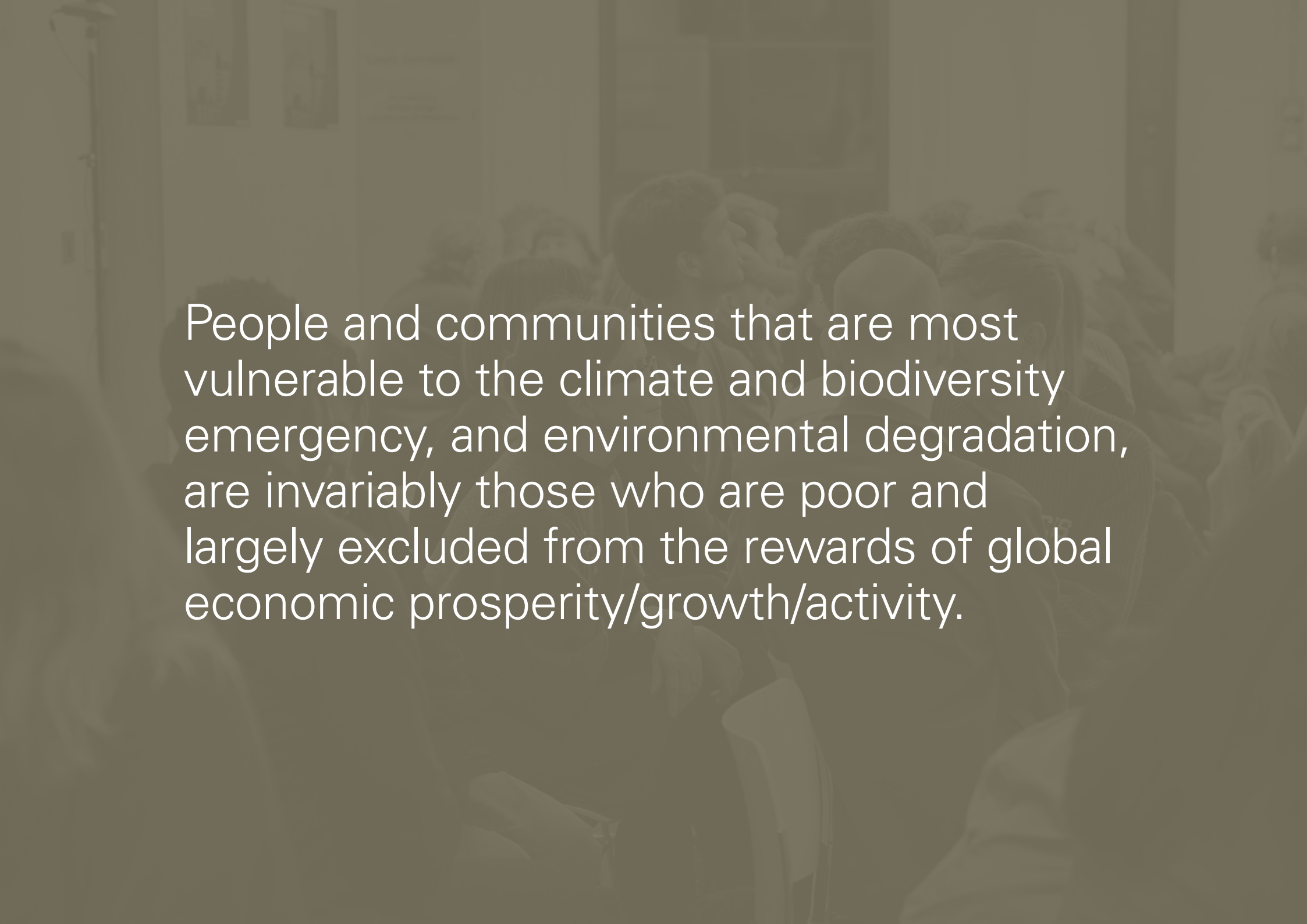
12 Climate Justice

We will seek to support those who are working for climate justice and strive to ensure equity and an improved quality of life for all.

We encourage all signatories, and all involved in architecture and built environment industry to consider how this two-fold declaration could be targeted.

- 1 Who can you **support** in your surroundings, either where you are based, or in the projects you deliver? Plan how you can support organisations and individuals that are working for climate justice, this may be financial contributions or giving space and time and attending events they organise.
- 2 How can you **strive to ensure** equity and improved quality of life for all engaged with your practice and impacted by your work? This should go beyond projects and be embedded in the operation of your organisation. Please see our Regenerative Architecture guidelines and particularly the section '[Creating a just space for people and planet](#)', for further resources.

To help signatory practices with this challenge this document focuses on definitions, positioning and lessons learnt by frontrunners in the industry that have taken meaningful action to embed climate justice in their practice. It is an invitation to take action, however small, to make the architecture and built environment industry more equitable.



People and communities that are most vulnerable to the climate and biodiversity emergency, and environmental degradation, are invariably those who are poor and largely excluded from the rewards of global economic prosperity/growth/activity.

3 What is climate justice?

- Climate justice begins with recognising people and communities are affected differently by the climate and biodiversity emergency.
- Climate impacts can exacerbate inequitable social conditions.
- People and communities that are most vulnerable³ to the climate and biodiversity emergency, and environmental degradation, are invariably those who are poor and largely excluded from the rewards of global economic prosperity/growth/activity.
- Responsibility for human-caused climate change is distributed unevenly. Most historical emissions⁴ are from the richest countries that have the most resources and capacity to adapt to rising temperatures.
- Young people and future generations who have contributed the least to historic emissions and destruction of biodiversity will suffer most⁵ from the impacts over the course of this century and beyond.
- Climate justice within this document is defined and understood as

place-specific, showing up differently around the world, and intersects with other forms of injustice and oppression. In the UK, it relates to societal inequities such as fuel poverty, scarce access to greenspace, air and water pollution, poor quality housing. These issues disproportionately affect Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities⁶ as well as those who lack resources, live in de-industrialised and working class areas, or are living in what can be defined as sacrifice zones⁷.

- It is important to be aware that the effects of the climate emergency disproportionately impact people who already face social injustices and racism, and have done the least to cause it. The Global North is responsible for 92% of total excess CO2 emissions (Hickel, 2020)⁸ and fundamentally, “the ecological crises is ultimately playing out along colonial lines” (Hickel, 2024)⁹, meaning that much of the climate injustice we see today, has roots in historical colonial and imperialist injustice and violence.

In the Global South, climate injustice is more visible and pronounced. It can be deadly, often inescapable, and has been experienced for a greater length of time than in the Global North—fuelling conflict, dispossession, droughts, famine, loss of land and water sources, unpredictable and extreme weather, and ongoing neo-colonial extraction.

It is important to actively consider human factors and climate justice not only in new construction, but in the adaptation and retrofit of existing buildings and infrastructure. In addressing the climate and biodiversity emergency, and their root causes, there is a huge opportunity to change how we design and deliver our built environment to address structural inequalities, and to ensure more socially equitable outcomes in relation to social and climate justice.

Through our work, we have extensive agency to advocate for climate justice and pivoting towards a regenerative society, and we have a great deal to learn from those having to fight for it.

- 3 <https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1029/2018GL078430>
- 4 <https://ourworldindata.org/contributed-most-global-co2>
- 5 <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/about/frequently-asked-questions/keyfaq3>
- 6 <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/bame-and-poorer-londoners-face-air-quality-risk>
- 7 <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/sacrifice-zones-geoengineering>
- 8 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30196-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30196-0/fulltext)
- 9 <https://www.instagram.com/share/BAEYGnDcWZ>
- 10 <https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/>

4 What does Just Transition mean for built environment professionals

Just Transition is a vision-led, unifying and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable; redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. If the process of transition is not just, the outcome will never be. Just Transition describes both where we are going and how we get there. — [Just Transition Alliance](#)¹⁰

Communities and workers in the UK have experienced unjust transitions across various industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, mining, shipbuilding, and steel production, resulting in many people and places being left behind. Given this history, it is important that the scale of change needed in the built environment industry to respond to the climate and biodiversity emergency, whilst meeting society's needs and creating a regenerative future, is Just Transition-led.

The architectural sector is coming to the Just Transition space and joining the discussion later than others, so honouring the definitions, experience, wisdom and work of those before us is important from a Global Justice perspective.

A Just Transition of the built environment would include, but is about significantly more than, its decarbonisation and reaching Net Zero targets.

Beyond carbon emissions, research quantifies that 40% of any nations' healthcare costs are attributable to its built environment (Brown, 2016), that [construction generates 62% of the world's waste](#)¹¹ and that one third of the world's energy is used in the operation of buildings (RIBA, 2021).

Embedding Just Transition-led strategies within the built environment industry offers the opportunity to address these structural issues, whilst simultaneously addressing ecological and social crises.

Just Transition opportunities in the built environment include:

- The retrofit of millions of homes, generating tangible training and employment opportunities by improving peoples' housing and material conditions
- The transition to a circular economy, increasing the demand for re-use, deconstruction, salvage, storage and redistribution capacity
- The phasing out of petrochemical-based materials with an associated move towards bio-based materials, encouraging the cultivation of reciprocal relationships between construction, forestry, and agriculture

Given the social positioning of architectural workers, as a nexus point between many others, and the reach of the work we can do, we have extensive agency to enable and catalyse a Just Transition through our practice. **We can have greater agency and affect even greater change when we act collectively and collaboratively: as campaigners, in coalitions, in cross-sector bodies, and in trade unions.**

¹¹ <https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2021/03/28/construction-and-demolition-sites-do-you-know-whats-in-your-waste>

5 Honesty and agency / acting for change / learning and sharing knowledge / embedding justice in practice

Honesty and Agency are two crucial pillars in architecture. **Architectural practices exist to serve the public interest by delivering high-quality, safe, and sustainable built environments.** In line with **ARB Code of Conduct** and **RIBA standards**, they provide competent, ethical, and independent professional services—design, coordination, and oversight—ensuring legal compliance, technical excellence, and environmental responsibility. Architects act with integrity, transparency, and accountability, placing users, communities, and the long-term value of the built environment at the centre of every project.

Honesty can feel like an obvious value and is standard 1 of the ARB code of conduct, but in practice it's hard to hold on to. In the built environment, the pressure to present work in the best possible light is immense —whether winning clients, competing for awards, or trying to stand out in a crowded market. It's in these moments that good intentions can slip into overclaiming or oversimplifying, and this is where greenwashing can take root.

The consequences aren't abstract. When we overstate what a project can deliver, or gloss over the trade-offs, trust erodes. Communities lose faith in what architects and

designers say, and the idea of sustainable design starts to feel hollow. That's why honesty isn't just a communications issue—it's an ethical one, central to climate justice. Because the people who suffer most when promises fall short are the same people already living with consequences of the climate and biodiversity emergency.

Where our agency lies

We all know the industry has limits—commercial realities, client expectations, budget constraints. But we also hold more agency than we sometimes admit. Decisions about whether to retrofit or demolish, what materials to use, or how to involve communities have ripple effects that stretch far beyond the project boundary.

Being honest about those choices means recognising the causality: how a statement today shapes outcomes tomorrow. If we call a building “net zero” but rely heavily on offsets, what message are we sending? If we claim design for inclusivity but don't create meaningful ways for local people to shape the process, who are we really serving?

Honesty is about facing these uncomfortable questions head-on and not hiding behind glossy narratives. If we don't present clients

and communities with the realities of their project's impacts, we also risk losing opportunities for wider climate literacy and advocacy.

What greenwashing looks like

Greenwashing does not always come in the form of outright lies. More often, it's vagueness, selective storytelling, or well-meaning ambition without measurable evidence. The Anti-Greenwash Charter is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to ensure credible sustainability communication. Founder Charlie notes, “we see it daily: phrases like “eco-friendly” or “sustainable” with nothing to anchor them, statistics used without context, or bold visions that don't line up with the detail of delivery. Calling this out isn't about pointing fingers—it's about building a culture where honesty is the baseline. When we're transparent about what we know, what we don't, and what we're still working on, we give others agency too. Clients, collaborators and communities can then make informed decisions and share responsibility for outcomes”

Here are some simple,
practical ways to bring honesty
into day-to-day practice...

Claiming honesty



Know and like the architects code of conduct, claim honesty in projects, in your practice and nurture a healthy discussion about it.

Share agency



Bring clients and communities into the truth of decisions —including the trade-offs. That honesty builds trust, even when the story is complicated.

Build alliances



Create or join a network of other professionals that you can offer support and share knowledge. Normalise independent review: A second pair of eyes—whether peer, partner, or external—strengthens credibility and keeps us accountable.

Create a transparent way of communicating...



...and information, such as transparency in supply chains or a Green Claims Policy. The latter would be a clear guidelines stop claims being made in haste and ensure everyone in a practice is working to the same standard.

Balance ambition with evidence



Bold visions matter, but they must sit alongside transparent data, methods and caveats.

Evaluate projects with meaning



Is it delivering healthy spaces (homes or otherwise), is it using what is given on the site (retrofit / nearby products), is it positively impacting neighbourhood (cooling the city), delivering civic infrastructure, healthy homes (retrofit), good green jobs, green skills.

6 Stories and lessons learnt

Architects Declare have the privilege through the Regenerative Design Index and the input from our signatories to regularly see the trailblazing work architects and built environment professionals execute and the positive change they participate in.

In 2024, Architects Declare invited signatories to share their experience in working with intent to address Climate Justice. We invited respondents and collaborators to share how they have embedded climate justice within their daily work and lives.

Acting for change—engagement/activism

- 1 A Just Transition town hall at Architype's Edinburgh studio**
Scott McAulay, Regenerative Designer, Educator and Strategist
- 2 Campaign—Retrofit for the Future**
ACORN, Campaign Against Climate Change, Fuel Poverty Action, Green Job Alliance, Medact and the Peace and Justice Project

Learning and sharing knowledge

- 3 Education beyond the industry—Anthropocene Architecture School**
Scott McAulay, Regenerative Designer, Educator and Strategist

Embedding justice in practice

- 4 Towards regenerative practice: DSDHA's integration of regenerative design principles as an organising structure for the studio**
Tom Greenall, Director & Hodan Buhari, Head of Studio
- 5 Educating clients on the ethics, equity and injustice of lower carbon construction materials**
Brogan MacDonald, Ramboll

Shaping policy and frameworks

- 6 Just Transition plan for the London borough of Newham**
Andrew Kemp, Newham Council

Projects for equity and health

- 7 The Canning Town and Cody Road strategic regeneration framework**
We Made That
- 8 Great Ormond Street healthy hospital street**
Magali Thomson, Project Lead for Placemaking, Great Ormond Street Hospital and Scott Carroll, Director, LDA Design

Collaborating with communities

- 9 Community-led project just neighbourhood transformation, Ladywood, Birmingham**
Civic Square

Acting for change—engagement/activism

A JustTransition town hall at Architype's Edinburgh studio

Summarised by Event Co-Production Lead and Facilitator, **Scott McAulay**, Regenerative Designer, Educator and Strategist

As part of a series of co-developed events in October and November 2024, Architype hosted the first JustTransition Town Hall of its kind in Edinburgh at its studio, focused on the built environment and housing.

With Architype playing the role of host and facilitator, the event was carefully co-designed to:

- ➔ Connect local people to ongoing activities, efforts and happenings in their local area
- ➔ Emphasise and raise awareness of the role of the built environment in tackling the climate crisis and in a JustTransition
- ➔ To platform a variety of perspectives on this.

Participants heard from and had the opportunity to ask questions of their local council's adaptation team, two Living Rent (community and tenants union) branches, EALA Impacts—built environment practitioners striving to work regeneratively with their local community, and a retrofit charity—Changeworks. Demonstrating a future impactful role of architectural studios, Architype co-created and co-hosted a space and time for connection, eye-opening conversations, discussion between significant civil society actors and the public, and for overlap that would not have happened otherwise.

Making time for gatherings and cross-sectoral discussions like this is essential to deepen relationships and cultivate shared understandings essential for a just transition.



Panel discussion becoming a lively public forum.

Acting for change—engagement/activism

Campaign—Retrofit for the Future

ACORN, Campaign Against Climate Change, Fuel Poverty Action, Green Jobs Alliance, Medact and the Peace and Justice Project

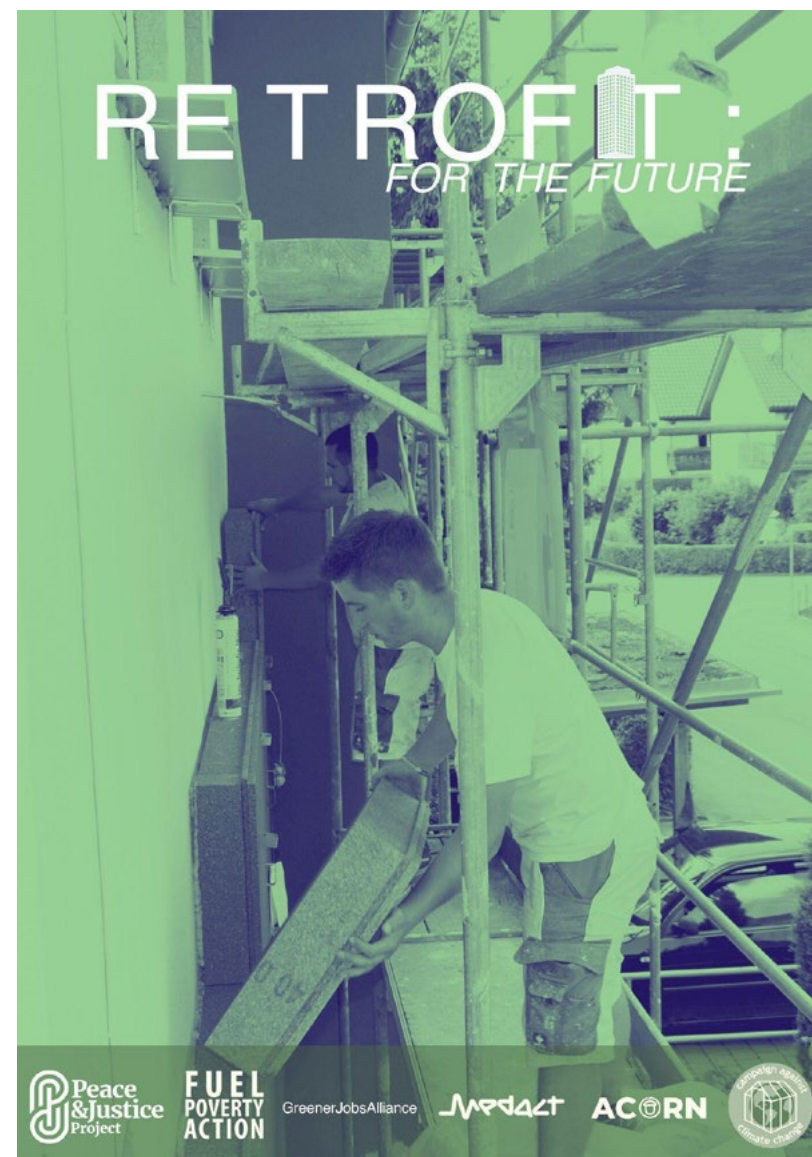
Launched on 19th March 2025, this campaign led by a coalition of civil society groups powerfully links the climate, health and justice aspects of retrofitting homes and the need to reduce society's reliance on fossil fuels. Unlike some retrofit campaigns before it, [Retrofit for the Future](#)¹² is not focused on homeowners, and is justice-centered, speaking up about growing fuel poverty and rising energy costs, the societal consequences of retrofitting not being carried out fairly, and the harm that the poor condition of the UK's housing does to our health.

The campaign seeks to build grassroots and public support, and has three demands of the government:

- Develop a Workforce Skills Plan—addressing the retrofit skills gap while creating secure, sustainable green jobs.

- Protect Private Renters—introduce no-fault eviction and rent moratoriums during retrofit upgrades.
- Ensure Accountability for Retrofit—placing residents at the heart of decision-making, mandating independent assessment, improving regulation, and ensuring robust monitoring and reporting.

This emphasizes what true just transition requires = showing how climate action can directly improve lives, increase equity and strengthen communities.



.....
Campaign poster for
Retrofit for the future

12 <https://retrofitforthefuture.co.uk/>

Learning and sharing knowledge

Education beyond the Industry— Anthropocene Architecture School

Scott McAulay, Regenerative Designer, Educator and Strategist



Despite growing awareness in architecture, the scale of the built environment's contribution to climate breakdown remains poorly understood outside the construction sector. This gap in understanding the scale and scope of—what can be exciting—possibilities holds back wider action for a positive change. Fusing climate literacy and unlearning with explorations of agency and spatial justice, the Anthropocene Architecture School began supporting architecture students and teaching climate campaigners in 2019, curating a library of further resources all the while.

Over time, the project began to collaborate with and support many groups beyond the traditional construction sector and universities with talks and workshops — from artists, community groups and fuel poverty campaigners to tenants union members and health workers, introducing

the built environment and its contributions to the climate crisis alongside its Just Transition potential and stories of the possible.

Between 2019 and 2025, the AAS was involved in catalysing and contributing to >150 events across the UK and internationally, creating opportunities for thousands of people to connect, and un/learn along the way.

AAS exemplifies how education can become an act of justice and space to cultivate agency, expanding the role of architecture far beyond the delivery of buildings.

.....
AAS Spatial Injustice Walking Tour on the
Wyndford estate prior to the demolition
of its four tower blocks

Embedding justice in practice

Towards regenerative practice: DSDHA's integration of regenerative design principles as an organising structure for the studio

Tom Greenall, Director and Hodan Buhari, Head of Studio

DSDHA describes itself as a values-led studio. We aspire to approach the design of our practice in the same way we approach the design of our projects. In essence, we strive to create an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable environment.

The publication of AD's Regenerative Design Primer gave us the motivation to apply this thinking more rigorously and more fundamentally to the structure, organisation, and operation of the studio. With the commitment of the directors, the process of restructuring the practice was led by our Head of Studio, Hodan Buhari.

Adopting AD's three pillars of regenerative design (become a good ancestor, create a just space for people, and co-evolve with nature) led to the formation of three 'super groups' – an Environmental Justice Group, a Social Justice Group, and a

Future Practice Group – each comprised of three subgroups, for example the biodiversity group, material innovation group, EDI group, etc. To avoid these groups reinforcing existing hierarchical structures in the studio, expressions of interest to lead these groups were open to everyone. On a rotating basis, one of the three subgroup leads is appointed to act as head of their associated super group. As a result, we now have a leadership team that extends from Part II level to senior associate level, each with a mandate and budget to implement change in both how we run the studio and how we approach the design of projects.

Membership of the various groups was also agreed through expressions of interest. The work of these groups is considered a core part of the studio. As such, time is resourced to the work they undertake and their outputs are reviewed the same

way as projects, ensuring that our path towards becoming a regenerative practice is achieved equitably and inclusively.

As a result, DSDHA has:

- Identified and recruited for new internal roles
- Developed and adopted new policies
- Established new criteria for the design and evaluation of projects

Explaining our organisational structure to new clients when bidding for work (a typical requirement of tender submissions) has sometimes been challenging. In doing so, however, we find ourselves advocating for a regenerative design approach at precisely the stage that foundational change is both possible and necessary.



.....
DSDHA photo of members of the studio's Social Justice Group working with young people to build a pavilion outside the William Morris Gallery

Embedding justice in practice

Educating clients on the ethics, equity and injustice of lower carbon construction materials

Brogan MacDonald, Ramboll, Head of Sustainability in Building Structures

As the Head of Sustainability in Ramboll Building Structures, I've led our approach to mandatory reporting of embodied carbon, prioritising reuse, and considering the ecological impacts of our designs. However, missing from this vital conversation are material provenance, ethical sourcing, and equity of finite lower-carbon solutions. This is a significant issue in the concrete and steel sectors.

Ramboll have committed to ConcreteZero and SteelZero, driving market demand signals for a just-transition net-zero concrete and steel. The topic is complex and nuanced, deep in technical detail, which often isolates our clients from the journey. It was time to take them on board and educate them about these reputational risks and ethical decisions we must consider on projects. Thus, Ramboll organised an event to take developers on a journey of education and insight into the ethics of achieving net-zero embodied carbon buildings.

Unlike many sustainability events that tread familiar ground, this event was designed to spark meaningful, and sometimes uncomfortable, conversations about the ethical considerations shaping our industry's future.

The session challenged participants with questions such as:

- Is it ethical to claim a building is sustainable if it consumes more than the UK's fair share of GGBS?
- Should projects specify Electric Arc Furnace steel exclusively, potentially limiting availability for others?
- With reclaimed steel supply so low, are we truly reducing global emissions, or simply shifting impact elsewhere?

Since the event, the answer to this question is now clearer thanks to [The role of scrap in steel decarbonisation—The Institution of Structural Engineers](#).¹³

With demand for reclaimed steel at an all-time high but supply still worryingly low, could one even argue that projects using large proportions of reclaimed steel—thereby preventing its use elsewhere—are not actually reducing global emissions?

A key point was the urgent need for transparency in supply chains—we cannot make informed ethical decisions without knowing where our materials come from. Our shared goal must be to demonstrate how every project contributes to global decarbonisation, fostering collaboration across supply chains and scaling impact. How we achieve that in practice is by far the greatest challenge. If ensuring the fair share of resources is the only equitable way to reduce global emissions, it's perhaps time to reimagine our 'competitors'—not as rivals over these lower carbon materials, but as mutual custodians of these finite resources?

The discussions underscored several important themes:

- Ethics must lead: Sustainability decisions must prioritise equity, transparency, and humility.
- Think global, act local: The path to decarbonisation requires global thinking, rather than project focused emission reduction.
- Signal demand carefully: What we prioritise in material specifications sends powerful messages to markets, shaping supply chains for better or worse.
- Transparency is critical: Understanding the origins and impacts of materials is key to making informed ethical decisions.
- Act now, lead boldly: Leaders must take decisive actions today to set the standard for tomorrow.

¹³ <https://www.istructe.org/resources/the-role-of-scrap-in-steel-decarbonisation/>



Ramboll organised an event to take developers on a journey of education and insight into the ethics of achieving net-zero embodied carbon buildings.

.....
Ramboll client
event



Shaping policy and frameworks

Just Transition Plan for the London Borough of Newham

Andrew Kemp, Head of Strategy Climate Action Team,
Newham Council



At both a global and a London level, climate change is making inequality worse. In [Newham¹⁴](#), we believe that a just transition offers us an opportunity not only to reduce negative climate impacts, but to address wider injustices that are embedded in our economy and society.

Newham residents have a lower carbon footprint than the average Londoner, yet live in one of the most climate vulnerable parts of the UK. Here, the global effects of climate change manifest in increased struggles to heat homes or put food on the table, amplifying local concerns about the quality of air that children are breathing, and a lack of access to nature.

Our Just Transition Plan was developed in collaboration with leading thinkers in this space, with Dark Matter Labs and Arup working with council stakeholders to produce an intersectional, justice-based blueprint for climate action. We need to move beyond carbon tunnel vision and engage with residents and communities in terms that

really resonate with people. Simply speaking, the Just Transition Plan offers a checklist for us to assess our work against: if it is not reducing emissions, increasing equity and building future read-iness, then we need to think a little harder.

In practice, this means that when we plan a project, we are trying to use climate action to maximise co-benefits and tackle priority issues like fuel poverty, food insecurity and poor health. As we planted 18,500 new trees over the past Two years, we were prioritising locations where vulnerable people learn, play and heal, using nature-based solutions to improve air quality, enhance biodiversity and reduce flood risk all at once.

Likewise, as we seek to find ways to cut bills and fossil fuels across the borough, we see it as a chance to empower residents through co-design, skills building and good, green jobs. Our growing community energy programme shows that you can even do this whilst directing profits back into community projects.

Fig 1 Cover page 'Just Transitions Plan for the London Borough of Newham'

Source We Made That

¹⁴ <https://www.newham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6800/newham-just-transition-plan-december-2023>

Projects for equity and health

The Canning Town and Cody Road strategic regeneration framework

Team: We Made That, Useful Projects, Steer, Cushman & Wakefield

Client: LB Newham



Fig 2 The project translates Newham's Just Transition Plan in a series of practical projects and actions for the council to kick start circular industries, restore the riverside ecology and create improved connections between new neighbourhoods and places of work.

Source We Made That

The Canning Town and Cody Rd Strategic Regeneration Framework exemplifies how strategic regeneration can advance climate justice through practical sustainability interventions. Working with local businesses and community partners, this industrial intensification framework demonstrates that environmental and social equity goals are mutually reinforcing rather than competing priorities.

The project directly supports three key areas of Newham's Just Transition Plan. Firstly, it advances circular economy principles by connecting existing businesses already engaged in materials recovery — including textile recycling, reclaimed steel supply, and hair salon waste processing operations. Over 30 priority projects support circular business models, with initiatives ranging from shared EV charging schemes to pallet reuse and measured that transform waste streams into valuable community resources.

Additionally, the framework addresses Newham's position as the second most at-risk area to extreme heat in the UK through 'cooling routes' that provide street trees and sustainable drainage systems. These green corridors crucially connect climate-vulnerable communities to the River Lea and local employment opportunities,

supporting active travel connectivity while using high albedo materials to reduce surface temperatures. The 2km of new cycling infrastructure and 500m of riverside walkway directly tackle transport disadvantage while mitigating climate risks for those most exposed to extreme heat.

Finally, the project creates resilient neighbourhoods through targeted interventions like greening industrial streets — areas suffering from poor air quality and noise pollution from heavy goods vehicle movement. Collaborative maintenance regimes between businesses also create a biodiverse public realm that buffers industrial impacts while supporting community health.

The approach recognises that climate action must address structural inequalities. Business forums enabled genuine participation from local employers in shaping circular initiatives, ensuring green economic transition benefits existing communities. By connecting the riverside industrial area to surrounding residential developments, the framework proves that 30,000m² of intensified industrial space can simultaneously deliver environmental restoration, inclusive employment, and climate resilience.

Projects for equity and health

Great Ormond Street healthy hospital street

Magali Thomson, Project Lead for Placemaking, Great Ormond Street Hospital and Scott Carroll, Director, LDA Design

In an area that scores highly in the Index of Multiple Deprivation criteria and has a chronic shortage of green space for local communities, Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) is supporting the pathway to net zero emissions, and creating a healthier, child-friendly public realm around the hospital. for patients, visitors, staff and local residents.

The vision is to transform a polluted and traffic-dominated street into a climate-resilient, healthy, and child-friendly one. This has the potential to become the first 'Healthy Hospital Street' in London, a concept which could be replicated further. At Great Ormond Street, we realise that it is no longer enough to treat the child, we also need to treat the environment they are in. This thinking has led to this project and development of a concept design; a collaboration between GOSH, Camden Council, LDA Design and TfL with the project's engagement process helping empower young people to influence design of their built environment.

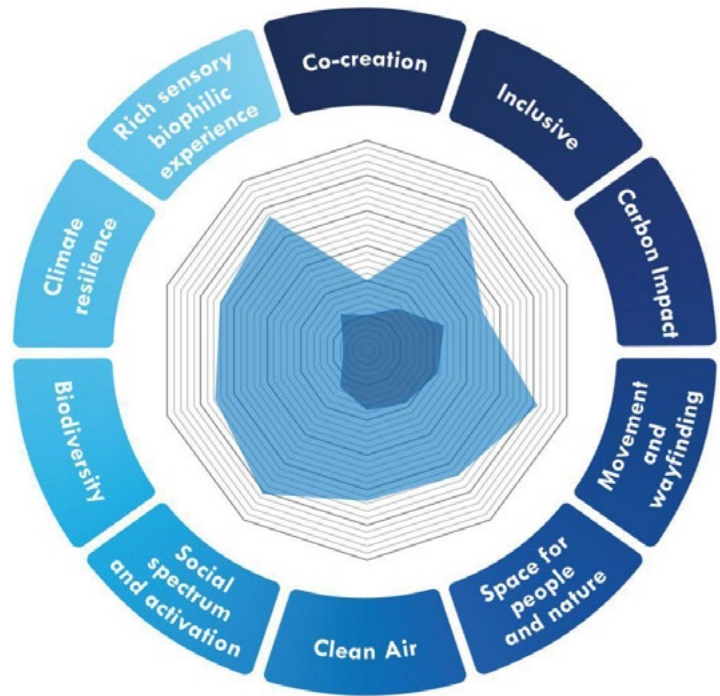
The ambition to make Great Ormond Street London's healthiest, most child-friendly hospital street will create a radical model for urban design that could set a UK standard, delivering significant social, environmental and economic value, whilst ensuring hospital logistics are efficiently maintained.

The proposals reclaim vehicle space for the hospital and wider community to enjoy with 'play on the way', active travel, rainwater gardens, communal dining, integrated art and seasonal planting with a high ecological value, creating a healing, biophilic environment which also enhances climate resilience. Recently held GOSH play street events provide a glimpse of the impact the project could have, creating a new exemplar for other hospitals, demonstrating how healthcare can integrate seamlessly with the community as part of the healthy city.



Top Great Ormond Street currently
Bottom Great Ormond Street
proposal by LDA Design

Fig 3 Healthy Hospital Wheel
Source LDA Design



	Existing scheme	Proposed scheme
Co-creation	0.50	1.00
Inclusive	0.74	2.37
Carbon Impact	1.15	1.75
Movement and wayfinding	1.06	2.56
Space for people and nature	0.93	2.21
Clean air	0.85	2.15
Social spectrum and activation	0.64	2.54
Biodiversity	0.36	2.29
Climate resilience	0.36	2.21
Rich sensory biophilic experience	0.63	2.37
Healthy Hospital Streets Score	7.21	21.44

Score out of 30

The project will form part of the wider Holborn Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme, and a funding strategy is being prepared in partnership by GOSH Charity, GOSH Trust, TfL and Camden Council.

From the outset, LDA Design, in partnership with GOSH realised the value of using the project as a means of developing an approach that could be used by other hospitals. This recognition led to the development of the Healthy Hospital Streets (HHS) Wheel; a tool that covers all considerations within the widely used

Healthy Streets Wheel, but with additional considerations to enable a more holistic and just approach.

To align with a typical project process, the HHS Wheel groups ten considerations chronologically into three categories. Firstly, considerations that run throughout the entire project process: cocreation, inclusiveness and carbon impact.

Secondly, considerations involving re-assignment of space: movement and wayfinding, space for people and nature

and clean air, and thirdly considerations involving introduction of multi-functional programme: social spectrum and activation, biodiversity, climate resilience and rich sensory biophilic experience.

The HHS Wheel provides a means for the NHS, education providers, local authorities, private developers and local authorities to work collaboratively to address the health, environmental, social and financial challenges that our hospitals, and the communities they are part of face.

Collaborating with communities

Community-led project just neighbourhood transformation, Ladywood, Birmingham

Civic Square

With their work, [Civic Square](#)¹⁵ shows how demonstrating neighbourhood-scale civic infrastructure works for the social, ecological, economic and climate transition.

Public Infrastructure Design is one chapter of the [Neighbourhood Public Square](#)¹⁶ publication, co-authored and co-built by CIVIC SQUARE.

Based in Ladywood, Birmingham, the Neighbourhood Public Square seeks to demonstrate regenerative civic infrastructure. It explores how co-building and democratising shared spaces, tools, and resources can support a bold and distributed transition, held in common with the neighbourhood.

Within our wider work, it represents a significant demonstrator for many layers of regenerative redesign around land stewardship, finance, governance, as well as building design, construction and retrofit. The focus of this is to discover the capacities and capabilities required for

neighbourhood transitions in an ambitious, emergent and participatory way.

At the heart of this, the fundamental enquiry that we are continually seeking to build out, experiment with, prototype and nurture the possibility for remains, for us to answer courageously, boldly and tangibly together in the here and now:

What if the climate transition and retrofit of our homes and streets were designed, owned and governed by the people who live there?

[‘It’s about quality of life’: Can Birmingham’s Retrofit House help fix the UK’s terrible housing?](#)¹⁷

The Guardian, Nov 2025

[Retrofit House spearheads Birmingham’s domestic refit revolution](#)¹⁸

Architects Journal, Dec 2025

[Extract Physical Infrastructure Design](#)¹⁹

Civic Square

15 <https://civicsquare.cc>

16 <https://medium.com/neighbourhood-public-square>

17 <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/nov/17/birmingham-retrofit-house-in-ladywood>

18 <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/retrofit-house-spearheads-birmingham-domestic-refit-revolution/>

19 <https://medium.com/neighbourhood-public-square/physical-infrastructure-design-4daf850a092a>

7 Where can I dig deeper?

Books + film

It's Not That Radical: Climate Action to Transform Our World, Mikaela Loach, 2023.

The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables from a Planet in Crisis, Amitav Ghosh, 2021.

Pollution is Colonialism, Max Liboiron, 2021.

Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World , Tyson Yunkaporta, 2020.

Sand Wars (film)

Non-Extractive Architecture: On Designing without Depletion, Multiple Contributors, 2021.

For the Love of Power, Afterparti Collective, 2022.

Sound Advice, Now You Know: A Collection of Sound Advice to Challenge Spatial and Racial Inequality, Sound Advice, 2021.

Architecture Fringe, (Un)Learning Through Architecture, Architecture Fringe, 2021

Many more parts than MI, Dis Ordinary Architecture Project, 2024. <https://disordinaryarchitecture.co.uk/start-learning/many-more-parts>

A People's Green New Deal, Max Ajl, 2021.

Climate Justice: A Man-Made Problem With a Feminist Solution, Mary Robinson, 2019

RIBA Ethical Practice Guide, Carys Rowlands & Alasdair Ben Dixon, 2023.

Building Inclusion: A Practical Guide to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Architecture and the Built Environment, Marsha Ramroop, 2024.

Architecture's externalities <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/CDP-excerpt-2023-1.pdf>

Not the End of the World, Hannah Ritchie, 2024.

Online resources

Architect's Role in Creating Equitable Communities <https://www.aia.org/resource-center/architects-role-in-creating-equitable-communities>

3C Neighbourhood from CIVIC SQUARE and Dark Matter Labs <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/>

Homes that Don't Cost the Earth. <https://darkmatterlabs.notion.site/hdce>

Campaigns

Tell the truth
A campaign for honesty in the built environment.

Just Info Session—Living Future <https://living-future.org>

The Biological Inequity Index - The Centric Lab

Net Zero Community

SHADE UK

Fuel Poverty action

Podcasts

The Case for Climate Justice <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5MvfAQagGQ>

Planet A Talks on Climate Change <https://open.spotify.com/show/2BeJAAtEpD2iTfHWZ2xxGgo?si=vSM-zcYWSqKUICK-K6iHJA>

The Yikes Podcast <https://open.spotify.com/show/5rt2DC1hDOsMgW3P2Uxdan>

Climate Justice Center <https://www.climatejusticecenter.org/newsletter>

Nature Breaking <https://youtu.be/tLZSjg3cGMo>

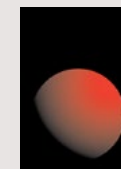
Agents of Change <https://open.spotify.com/show/3o99vegZUXFpSt6op9dMHK>

AD Building Justice <https://vimeo.com/768643189>

Architects Declare was launched as a not-for-profit organisation in the UK on 30 May 2019. Since April 2024 UK Architects Declare is a registered charity. At the time of publication, it has over 1,424 signatories in the UK. It is part of Built Environment Declares, which is now represented in 27 countries around the world.

This document has been created by an Architects Declare working group to help signatories convert their declaration into meaningful action and build momentum within their practice. The guide is intended to be a live, working document that helps fulfil the fourth point in our 12-point declaration by encouraging the sharing of knowledge and research on an open source basis. We expect this guide to evolve and be refined in future iterations as our understanding of the climate and biodiversity crises develops, and as our industry innovates to find new solutions to these challenges. We encourage our signatories—and other architectural practices or built environment practitioners—to contact us with feedback on this version and examples for the next version.

www.architectsdeclare.com



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