



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY



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James Nicholls
Managing Partner



Date: November 2023

SGP
Architects + Masterplanners



BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

Established in 1970, Stephen George + Partners (SGP) is an award-winning architectural practice operating in ten sectors of the construction industry. With offices in London, Leicester, Leeds, Solihull and Birmingham we provide pragmatic, sustainable solutions to clients in the private and public sector as well as offering specialisms in Masterplanning, interior design, digital services and the CDM Principal Designer role.

With an enviable portfolio of industry clients, we are a relationship-driven business that is built on our values (illustrated below). With these we aim to meaningfully and positively affect society and the environment through the practice's architectural work and policies.

We have a strong history of social responsibility and have designed one of the UK's first carbon neutral houses, the first large-scale industrial park to be fully certified BREEAM 'Outstanding', achieved an 'Outstanding' BREEAM rating for the SusCon Training and Research Centre at Dartford in Kent and won the RIBA President's Award for Outstanding Practice-located Research for our Guide to Building Materials and the Environment. This free resource has just been revised and re-issued. Our schools' education programmes, Stephen George + You and Better Buildings have both been recognised with external awards.

We are currently involved in implementing our own Sustainability Strategy which outlines our commitments over the next five years. These include our Route to Net Zero where we have undertaken to reduce our full Scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions, from a 2022-23 baseline to net zero by 2045.

Looking to the future, we are working alongside fellow built environment professionals at the UK Green Building Council and Planet Mark to realise our sustainability aspirations in areas such as materials specification and ecology and biodiversity.

This policy outlines these activities, and shows how they align to both our and society's wider goals.





SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SGP is committed to delivering long-term sustainability and social value. We recognise these under the heading of Social Responsibility and view it as an integral discipline within the practice. This document provides an overview of how we are making a positive impact on people and places through our activities.

At the heart of our overall approach to Social Responsibility is the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#). By utilising these, as an adopted framework, we have focused on three main ways we fulfil our Social Responsibility:

- **Education** SDG's 4, 12;
- **Social Value** SDG's 1, 3, 5, 10;
- **Environmental Conscience** SDG's:
 - Buildings** - 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 15;
 - Net Zero** - 9, 12.



we care
we challenge
we deliver

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EDUCATION

EDUCATION

As an RIBA Chartered Practice, we invest in our employee's continuing professional education. Beyond our Practice we continually look to identify and address emerging skill gaps. We are keen to highlight the breadth of roles available to those looking to enter the profession.

We have an award-winning national agenda, entitled 'Stephen George + You', where we are making strategic investments in local communities through our academic programme. For this SGP, in partnership with The Heaven Company, has carried out several ten-week education programmes involving groups of Key Stage 3 & 4 - Years 7 to 10 students - at selected schools in London, the Midlands and the North of England.

Working hand in hand with The Heaven Company and the schools we are delivering a thought-driven and innovative programme asking students about their understanding of the built environment today, what it means to them and what the future holds.

The course content has been devised to focus young minds on the role that school children play in improving the built environment of tomorrow; and, to encourage real-life learning applications of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Design and Maths) subjects.

We also engage with primary school pupils through our nationally available **Better Buildings** initiative. Again focused on STEAM, this web-based programme, supported directly in local schools, is designed to introduce pupils studying at Key Stage 2 to the importance of sustainable materials in building design.

Both the above programmes have been designed to inform the architects of the future, and have been delivered alongside project partners to support our social value offer on the ground.

In addition we have supported programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as part of the Brief Cases initiative alongside the Heaven Company, at De Montfort University, Leicester and Middlesex University respectively.



+ EDUCATION

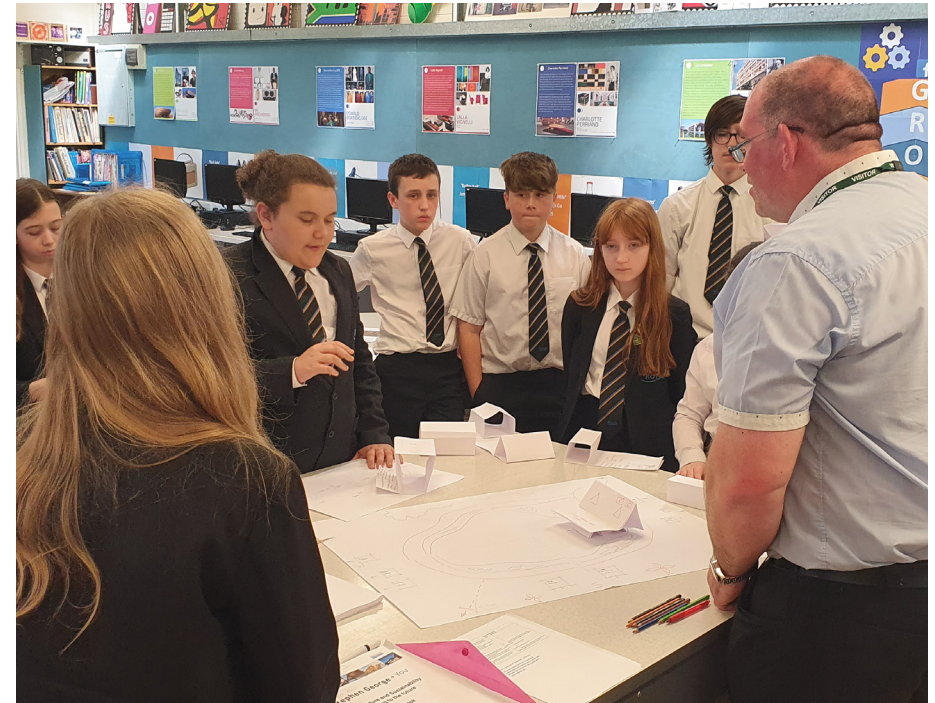
During the Covid-19 pandemic SGP launched an online competition for children to design their own house and submit it for a prize. Split into three categories, for ages under 7, 8 - 11 and 12 - 15, we received several submissions with the winners announced and prizes awarded in August 2020.

We were of the belief that whilst not at school, we still had the ability to educate and excite young minds in the realm of construction.

Building on the success of this engagement we ran a design competition in 2023 linked to our Better Buildings programme, which was judged by a panel of experts including representatives from Planet Mark and the Heaven Company.

To leverage our involvement with new and potential entrants to the industry, we provide mentoring through three different channels:

- Across our offices we offer ten work experience placements annually to students at High School level.
- We are actively engaged with Leicester, Leeds and Loughborough universities and wherever possible provide year out and graduate recruitment opportunities.
- We host groups of Undergraduate students, in conjunction with their university, taking them to site and showing them different aspects of the architectural profession. For example, in 2023, we hosted a cohort of students from Loughborough University at our Leicester office through a series of discussions with staff from our key business sectors and support functions.



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TESTIMONIALS

Rakesh Patel

Design and Technology Teacher at
St Mary's and St John's School



"For me, it's the first time I have been involved in the Architecture and Sustainability programme and it has been exciting, eye opening and the children have learned a lot. The way they reacted to external staff, the whole idea of learning something new, connecting the learning to real life, I think they have really enjoyed. And the whole project of architecture brings together the reality of their homes, their society, and the idea of being environmentally friendly, which was good. [Environment] is something that we are doing with Year 7 as an introduction and through this Architecture and Sustainability programme the students are doing their first project on the theme of environment and sustainability and that was good. It shows they know quite a lot when you put them to the test. I think they enjoyed it – I enjoyed it – having some-one else to teach and linking it to my topic: design and technology.

"We want to bring STEM learning in a big way and Brief Cases is a good example of it, Science, Engineering, psychology... insights and team work – it's the cross curricular aspects of the project that I like. Children are still ingrained in separate topics: English, maths, and can see they all link in careers. They don't learn independently in subjects; they learn specifics and skills and learn how to apply those skills. So the whole idea of STEM learning and being able to bring it across into the project is showing them that cross curricular is the way to think. It's that application and the ability to apply learning that came through in the Architecture and Sustainability project with Stephen George + Partners and Brief Cases."



Fiona Rogers

Leicester College

"We are really pleased to have had the opportunity to work on the Architecture and Sustainability project in collaboration with Stephen George + Partners and Brief Cases," says Fiona Rogers, Careers Leader at New College Leicester. "The enthusiasm and engagement of our Year 9 students and their research outside of the classroom were reflected in the excellent ideas and mock ups of planet friendly homes built during the sessions. We very much appreciate the commitment from Stephen George + Partners and The Heaven Company.

"Having recently been awarded Career Mark Gold in recognition of outstanding and continued commitment to careers education and guidance, we felt this was an excellent opportunity to encompass our ongoing drive to raise young people's aspirations and work towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmark as set out in the government's new Careers Strategy."



Philippa Wimberley

Head of Faculty, Design and Technology at
Saint Mary's and St John's School

"From the very beginning of our discussions, we were clear that SMSJ wanted to be involved with Stephen George + Partners, and Brief Cases. The lesson plans they've come up with are extremely well structured and spot-on for how we work and help our students to excel. We believe that everything is possible and want to nurture and inspire our students, so as a school and with the support of our senior leadership team, we were comfortable to give the full cohort of Year Seven students' exposure to the project. And, the students have absolutely loved making and designing their model homes, particularly as they've seen television programmes such as Grand Designs; and here they are, as students designing and building their very own model version."



+ TESTIMONIALS

We have sponsored the delivery of a module in the Post Graduate Masters in Global Governance at Middlesex University School of Law. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the module is a formal part of the course and challenges students to put forward a delivery strategy for a project in a deprived community.

Dr Meri Juntti

Programme Leader
Middlesex University

"I am glad to have had the opportunity to work with The Heaven Company to pilot Brief Cases at Middlesex. Offered to our MA Global Governance and Sustainable Development students for the first time this winter, Brief Cases is providing students with a unique insight into how sustainability, both environmental and social, can be furthered in the business sector and how the UN Sustainable Development Goals can inform business strategy. Our workshops have also demonstrated that students relish this opportunity to think creatively outside the academic remit while also applying the critical understanding of sustainable development issues and solutions that they have so far gained in their degree."





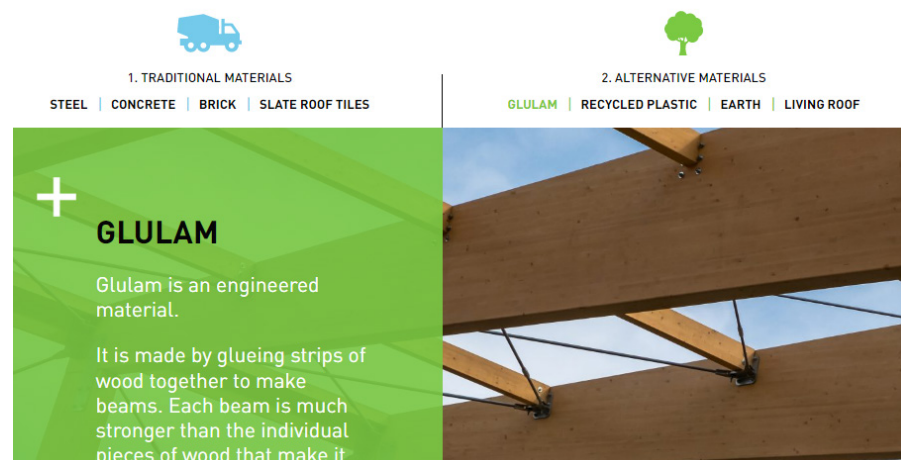
BETTER BUILDINGS PROGRAMME

WHY HAVE WE DONE THIS

Buildings, their materials and their construction, account for over 10% of global CO₂ emissions. As part of our commitment to working with the architects of the future through our schools programmes we have developed our [Better Buildings](#) website, an open source and free to use asset, to introduce the principles of embodied carbon and choice of building materials to primary school children.

INTRODUCTION TO THE WEBSITE

[Better Buildings](#) begins with an introduction to embodied carbon. Then, through a range of fascinating facts, an interactive carbon indicator and building examples the website introduces children to a range of traditional building materials. Low carbon alternatives are then explored before each child has the opportunity to design their own low carbon building. The website is supported by a section for teachers which includes lesson plans and curriculum links.



“As an engineer, I would have loved a lesson in imagining and designing buildings that are great for the planet and for people.

I have seen first-hand the wonderful ideas school children can bring to creating better buildings and, this exciting classroom resource gives them the ideas to fuel their imagination.”

Steve Malkin Founder of Sustainability Champions, Planet Mark



ROLL OUT IN SCHOOLS

To date we have supported the delivery of [Better Buildings](#) at schools in London and the East and West Midlands. We have also linked up to offer access to our programme through Let's Go Zero climate action initiative, with over one thousand schools already showing their commitment to a net zero future.

We continue to develop and promote our work as widely as possible and look forward to many more schools engaging with [Better Buildings](#) in the months and years to come.



“It has been great working alongside you and your company on [Better Buildings](#), a project you have all clearly worked very hard on... the children have loved it”.

Kelly Horton Year 4 Teacher, Tardebigge First School

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SOCIAL VALUE

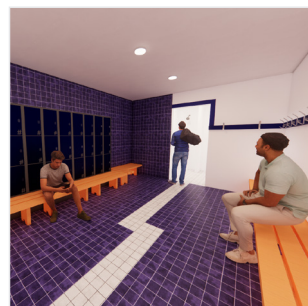
SOCIAL VALUE

We are passionate about social value as we believe that it adds positively “to the long-term wellbeing and resilience of individuals, communities and society in general” and therefore have commenced several initiatives. Some of which are outlined below.



Food Banks & Volunteering

In 2022, we began our support for the Trussell Trust, a charity that works with over 1,200 food bank centres across the UK. Along with donating food and toiletry items to our local food banks, our employees at SGP have also supported the charity by giving their time to the Trussell Trust by packing food parcels to be delivered to those in need.



Following an approach from property industry charity LandAid, we have been pleased to create a pro bono design for new changing facilities for Coventrians RFC clubhouse. The design, centred on the sustainable re-use of shipping containers, was completed in line with key RFU requirements to enable the club to seek grant funding to support further development.



We are delighted to have sponsored Ambleside Falcons Girls Junior Football Club over the 2021/22 season and going forward into the 2022/23 season.



We received a framed shirt to acknowledge their appreciation of our continuous support.



We have been proud sponsors of our very own honeybee hive, in partnership with The Honeybee Man Ltd.

The organic honey produced by our bees is sold internally and all money raised is then donated to charity.

In addition, we also acknowledge national and worldwide days dedicated to nature.

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SOCIAL VALUE



Following the success of our first Mental Health Week in 2021, and the positive feedback we received we have continued to develop our programme by inviting speakers to share their experiences with us each year. We continue to acknowledge the importance of mental health and wellbeing to help raise awareness of this important issue.



Each year we have enjoyed a number of successful coffee mornings across each of our offices in support of Macmillan Cancer Support. In 2023 we were pleased to raise over £250 from donations and purchases at our social events.



Annually we run an in-house Christmas Card competition.

Winners of the competition are shared on social media where we ask for our social community to like and nominate a charity of their choice. Three charities are drawn for which we make a donation.

This not only raises awareness of charities but also increases our charitable reach.



In addition to our charities, we also sponsor and participate in charitable events organised by a number of our clients. We are delighted that support is growing across the practice year-on-year as more people are getting involved.



For the last two years we have been invited to participate in the RAME consulting annual charity football match. Alongside some of our clients and other participating companies we have helped to raise over £11000 for the MS Society, YoungMinds and Interestingly Different.



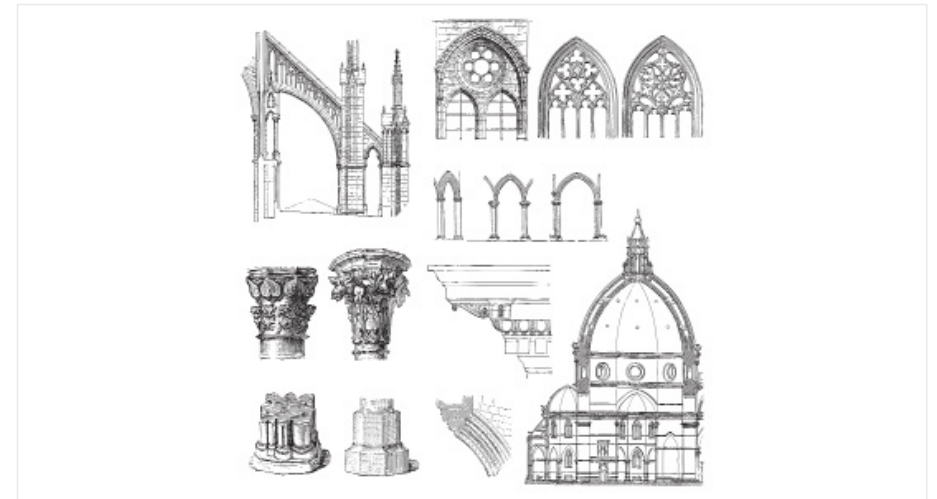
We support many of our clients, contractors and supply chain's charity initiatives as it broadens our charitable reach and helps awareness for as many charities as we possibly can. Each year we donate to the Prologis's Dock Doors of Giving Christmas campaign helping to raise much need funds for charities such as children's hospices, women's aid and those homeless. In addition we support Blue Leaf's charity delivering meals to unfortunate families.



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Sustainable Cities



Sustainability - The Role of the Architect



Sustainable Design in a Climate Emergency



One Step Beyond



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIENCE



The Planet Mark and ISO14001:2015

To demonstrate our environmental conscience, we hold the ISO14001:2015 Standard and the Planet Mark certification. The former holds all our operations to a high level of accountability, meeting or exceeding all legal and environmental requirements, as well as reducing our carbon footprint. The latter demonstrates our commitment to measure, engage and communicate sustainable operations and facilitates an increasing awareness of environmental challenges we face today.

Formalising our actions within the above Standard and Award allows us to:

- Review our efforts against key performance indicators (KPI's);
- Effectively communicate our plans within and outside our business;
- Share our results and successes; and
- Ensure that our emphasis on ethical and social issues is well aligned to local authorities, councils, corporate entities and Government thinking.

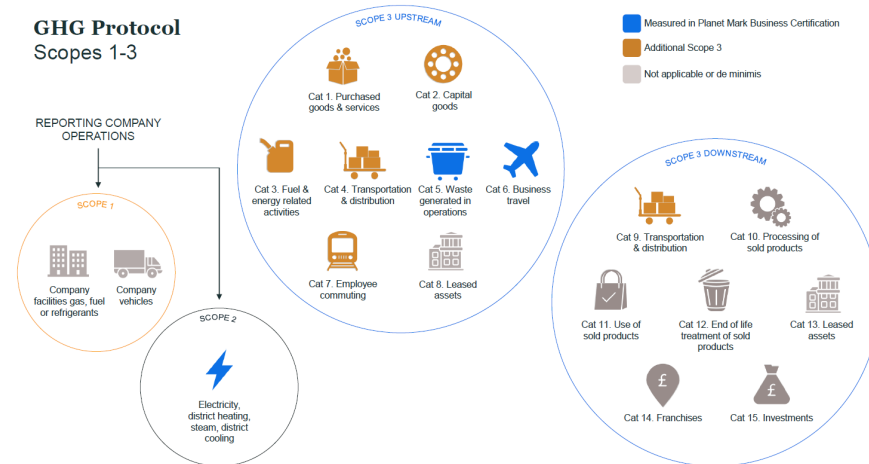
Route to Net Zero

In 2023 we extended our commitment to sustainability in following the Planet Mark Route to Net Zero. This Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) commits us to measure our full Scopes 1, 2 & 3 emissions which we completed for the first time in 2022-23 to establish our carbon emissions baseline. Our commitment continues to reduce our footprint by a minimum of 50% by 2030, followed by continuing reductions by at least 90% by 2050. At this stage we may legitimately offset an outstanding emissions through verified carbon removal offsets.

In support of our work to reduce our carbon emissions we completed a series of office-wide workshops to which all staff were invited, to identify and action de-carbonisation activities.

We have also begun to engage with our suppliers, who represent a significant part of our scope 3 emissions, to identify opportunities to reduce emissions through active collaboration.

GHG Protocol Scopes 1-3





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