

January 2025 Meeting Report:

Thursday 23 January 2025, Ege showroom

Core Team:

Harsha Kotak, WOD; Joanna Knight, WOD

Collective Members:

Ella Fathi, IOR Group; Rebecca Poll / Harriet Jacobs, Grimshaw; Asif Din, Perkins & Will; May Fawzy, MF Studio / BIID; Lucy Bagshaw, TP Bennett; Emily King / Magda Iwanska, BDP; Gurvinder Khurana, M Moser; Sameeha Joshi, Peldon Rose; Astrid Hugo, Gensler; Ana Rita Martins / Deepak Parmar, MCM; Nigel Tresise, Align; Jennie GreenWalker, MAA Architects; Dom Pegram, Salt & Pegram; Phil Towle / Alex Webb, The Furniture Practice; Anja Schellenbauer, John Robertson Architects; Fiona Edwards, JPA Workspaces; Sarah Audsley, Knight Frank; Alison Grant, HLW; Joanne Sanger, Woodalls; Claire Owens / Ruth Marsh, Sheppard Robson; Lydia Randall, BDG A+D; Sam Allen, M Moser; Deborah Allen, DouglasJane Studio; Jenna Monteith / Ilaria Baldini, Unispace; Mathew Freeman, Freeman Studio; Joe Croft / Zoe Glander, Overbury; Valerio D'Angelantonio, Make Architects; Robert Atkinson, Interior Architects; Roseanna Hart, Cast Interiors; Laura Wardrope, JLL; Caroline Pontifex, Savills; Jane Goodman, Think iDEA; Matt Davies, The Furnologists; Matthew Robinson, Ambit Moat

Purpose:

A 'think tank' group committed to acting as a collective within the workplace design community to identify developments and 'best practice' relating to sustainability.

This report highlights some of the points raised during the discussion.

Discussion Topic: Biodiversity Led by: Deborah Allen, DouglasJane Studio

How can we elevate the status and importance of biodiversity in our architectural and interior design projects to create spaces that not only meet the needs of clients but also contribute to the health of the planet?

Do we have a deep enough understanding of biodiversity to effectively integrate it into our design narratives and convince clients to prioritise it in their projects to create a strong narrative for building and organisations?



“Many city-centre projects do not include outside space. We can, however, commit to greater biodiversity through understanding and supporting supply chain initiatives.”

“The UK has been highlighted as having some of the lowest biodiversity in Europe and the Western world. Yet all too often interior products still rely on virgin raw materials. We need to understand products' material content and supply chains.”



SDC associate members meet every two months.

This report is part of our commitment to knowledge sharing.

“We should also be understanding impacts of products and the manufacturing processes in terms of pollution – and the potential impact on biodiversity.”

“Many roof top gardens and outside spaces do not include indigenous plants – the greater concern is aesthetics.”

“We should be aiming to create buildings that defend against flooding, provide habitats for pollinators, and help reduce overheating in urban environments.”

“Clients can support local and regional projects and help finance biodiversity projects.”

The “Wild West End” - Central London’s largest property owners are working together to encourage birds, bees and bats back into the heart of London, and create greater connections with nature for residents, visitors and workers to enjoy. Wild West End is a partnership between Capital and Counties, Church Commissioners for England, The Crown Estate, Great Portland Estates, Grosvenor Britain & Ireland, The Howard de Walden Estate, The Portman Estate, and Shaftesbury. Wild West End is endorsed by strategic partners London Wildlife Trust and Greater London Authority and supported by technical partner Arup.

“Pocket parks, small public spaces located in urban areas, are another example.”

Greater support is also needed for ecological corridors to protect and support biodiversity. Solutions, including the designation and creation of protected areas, often fail to effectively address the problem. Haphazard placement and lack of strong management are among the reasons.

An ecological corridor is a narrow strip of land or water that connects habitats, allowing animals and plants to move between them. Local communities can create small corridors, such as revegetating an area along a river to connect two forests. Large corridors can span across multiple landscapes and jurisdictions. They often require collaboration between many groups to manage them.

An SDC member highlighted that Ege Carpets has a re-wilding scheme around its factory in Denmark. It is also open to the community – and horses! Water projects have also been introduced to help manage flooding.

Continued/...

Discussion Topic: Decarbonisation of supply chains

Led by: Joanna Knight, Co-Founder, SDC

Are we also investigating company emissions within the supply chains beyond product carbon footprints? How can we incentivise change?

The UKGBC has established a supply chain decarbonisation workstream. The team has established six focus areas: Procurement; Low Carbon Materials; Cost; Data; Supplier and SME Engagement; and Knowledge and Skills. In year 1 of the workstream, the team are focusing on Procurement and on Supplier and SME engagement. SDC associate member, Phil Towle, is a member of the workstream.

“We need to work with our suppliers to understand their decarbonisation plans – not simply a product’s carbon footprint.”

“Many smaller suppliers are not currently measuring their Scope emissions and we can influence this.”

“We also need to focus on efficiency and waste reduction. Plasterboard sheet sizes is a good example.”

“British Gypsum offers a take back scheme for offcuts. In addition, designers can supply a BIM model to them and they will cut the plasterboard to size.”

“There are software planning tools, such as FirstPlanit, which can simplify complex product decisions for decarbonisation, health, resource efficiency and future proofing.”

“It is estimated that only around 30% of projects include full ‘end to end’ carbon measurement.”

Ege Carpets:



The showroom visit provided an opportunity for Tash to outline some of Ege’s ambitions.

As part of the company’s commitments, it has launched a Take-Back system which ensures used carpets go to recycling partners who separate and recycle up to 98-100% of the carpet components.

In the UK, Ege has partnered with Uplyfted – an organisation creating a second life for modular carpet systems and collaboration with social house schemes and local communities.



OTHER ACTIVITIES:

SD Magazine:

As part of its mission is to work collaboratively to share knowledge and 'best practice' to inspire and influence the workplace design sector, SDC has launched a digital publication. The ambition is to provide a platform for views, opinions, and projects within the office workplace sector.

SD Academy:

SDC is launching the first of a series of online courses specifically designed for designers working within the workplace environment.

SDC Forum and Awards:

The second forum and awards was held on 25th April 2024: an interactive event for workplace designers, manufacturers, and suppliers to share knowledge and learn about efforts towards greater sustainability.

FOOTNOTE:

The Sustainable Design Collective meets every two months. Each meeting addresses different initiatives designed to tackle the impact on our environment. A summary document will be published after each meeting which is hosted on the Sustainable Design Collective's web site – an example of knowledge sharing.

We welcome comment and contributions from the office design sector.