

# SCAFFOLDING

A CM  
PROFESSIONAL  
GUIDE  
SPRING 2023

## LOOKING UP

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Falling from height is still the most common cause of workplace fatalities – there have been 683 since 2005

683



# Work at Height regulations under threat

2,400 laws could be 'sunsetting' if new Bill is passed. One of these laws at risk is Work at Height Regulations.

**The government could scrap the UK's Work at Height Regulations at the end of 2023 unless campaigners can convince ministers to retain them.** This warning came from the Access Industry Forum (AIF), which represents the 10 principal trade associations and federations involved in work at height.

The 2005 Work at Height Regulations extended protection

to people in all industries who work at height. Falling from height is still the most common cause of workplace fatalities – there have been 683 since 2005. Provisional figures for 2021/22 show that of 30 fatal accidents involving construction workers, 13 were falls from height.

Following Brexit, the regulations governing work at height are covered by the Retained EU Law (Revocation

▲ Campaigners calling for rethink on Working at Height laws

and Reform) Bill which is currently passing through Parliament. This Bill seeks to remove EU-derived laws that remain on the UK statute book after Brexit. It proposes to 'sunset' more than 2,400 laws, one of which is the Work at Height Regulations.

If the Bill passes, the laws will be axed automatically on 31 December 2023 unless the government takes action to save individual regulations.

A coalition spearheaded by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), representing 10,000 safety organisations has called for more time to scrutinise the bill and separately NASC has written to Grant Shapps about this issue, and has also collaborated on letters from the Access Industry Forum and from Build UK.

# Scaffolding's search for the next generation

NASC initiatives to attract people into the industry are paying off



**The scaffolding industry, like most construction trades, continues to struggle to pitch itself as a career of choice for those looking for work.**

To address this NASC has undertaken various initiatives. These include involvement with the Young Builder of the Year Awards,

attending a ceremony at the House of Lords to raise the sector's profile and developing links with organisations offering opportunities to disadvantaged young people.

The consequences of Brexit on the availability of skilled labour has had a profound effect. NASC with

**NASC has set up the Returning Citizens Scheme to encourage ex-offenders into a career in scaffolding**

the support of Build UK and CLC has pushed for scaffolding to be included within the Shortage Occupations List (SOL) which is due for an interim review by the Migration Advice Committee (MAC). Allowing skilled workers from outside the UK to return to work here would provide a great boost to the workforce.

Working with its members, the Ministry of Justice, Her Majesty's Prisons, approved CISRS training providers and several charities, NASC has set up the Returning Citizens Scheme to encourage ex-offenders into a career in scaffolding.

Having signed up to the armed forces covenant, NASC is also sponsoring BFRS (British Forces Resettlement Service) careers fairs and the Military 2 Construction initiative across the UK in 2023. NASC offers full funding to members for all training and assessment required to qualify ex forces personal as scaffolders.

<https://scaffoldingcareers.nasc.org.uk/resources/>

## CISRS to boost instructor numbers

CISRS has been awarded a CITB commission to help fund the development and training of 16 new scaffolding instructors within England and Wales. The move is a bid to boost capacity and increase numbers coming into the scaffolding sector.

The following regions have been identified as most in need of support: Wales, South West,

North West, Midlands North East (Humber/North Yorkshire) and South Central (Hampshire, IOW, Berkshire, West Sussex, Bucks, Oxfordshire, Surrey).

CISRS scheme manager and NASC managing director, David Mosley said: "Qualifying a new scaffolding instructor can take considerable time. We are very grateful to CITB for offering this

support. CISRS will work closely with the providers to ensure that all relevant training, experience and assessment is given to new recruits to get them up to at least Part 1 approval status."

Interested applicants should email: [instructors@cisrs.org.uk](mailto:instructors@cisrs.org.uk) with details of where they are based and the regions they would be interested in working in.



▲ CISRS to develop 16 new scaffolding instructors thanks to CITB



SG4 has played a significant part in changing the culture of the industry and raising the standards of safety

learning, legal cases, enforcement action, good industry practices and new technology for fall prevention and protection.

To ensure the guidance remains current, obsolete products and methods of working that are no longer in common use have been removed. New sections have been introduced or further guidance provided to protect scaffolders and support employers in establishing safe systems of work. Additional case studies have also been used. Some of the new additions to SG4 include:

- Embracing technology
- Fragile surfaces
- System scaffolding
- Working with beams
- Temporary roofs

**How has accident learning influenced this revision of SG4?**

Sadly, we are still seeing fatalities and life-changing injuries in our trade as a result of falls from height. Many of these tragic accidents are avoidable. As a result of fatal accidents to non-NASC scaffolders since the last revision, new specific guidance has been added for working on traditional temporary roofs erected in situation and working on or near fragile surfaces.

**How has SG4 changed the industry?**

SG4 has played a significant part in changing the culture of the industry and raising the standards of safety.

The accident statistics within the NASC membership speak for themselves: an 87% reduction in the number of falls since 1999 despite an increase of nearly 50% in the number of scaffolders working for our members.

You don't have to look very far to see examples of unsafe practice. So, as an industry we can't rest on our laurels and the confederation and other industry stakeholders still need to keep promoting good practice.

Our clients now have a heightened awareness of scaffolding industry good practice through the publication of guidance such as SG4 and often play a major part in changing attitudes towards unacceptable risk-taking by scaffolders.

The marketplace for scaffolding contractors who ignore good practice is gradually getting smaller. And as a business owner the frustrations of losing work to competition that cuts every corner in the book is still a factor but is getting fewer. I would encourage anyone who is involved in scaffolding activities – from scaffolding contractors through to H&S consultants, principal contractors and beyond – to familiarise themselves with SG4:22 and ensure scaffolders in their charge are working to this guidance at all times. ●

This article first appeared in NASC Yearbook 2023.

# Safety check

Alan Harris, chair of the NASC's health and safety committee on the long-awaited safety guidance SG4:22

**SG4 is a flagship industry guidance** produced by the NASC. It received a long-awaited update last year, replacing SG4:15.

SG4 illustrates current preventative and protective measures which represent good industry practice when establishing safe systems of work to prevent and protect against falls from height during scaffolding operations. The guidance was updated to ensure it remains current and reflects the needs of the access and scaffolding industry.

The SG4:22 review ensures the guidance features methods of work and equipment that reflects current industry good practice. The working party considered accident



▲ SG4:22 updates good practice guidance



image: CAA House, London

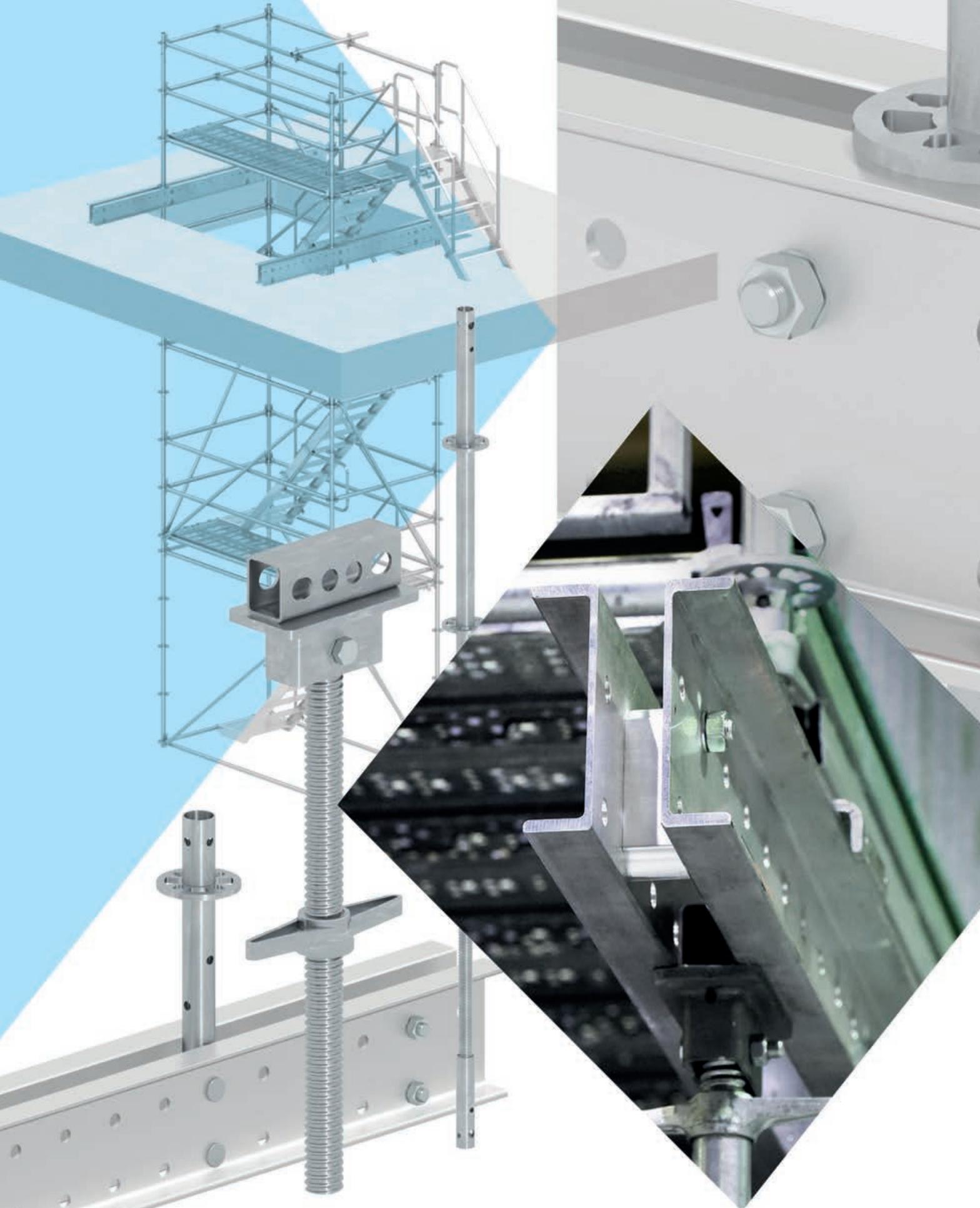
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### **FIREPROOF.**

After the tragic Grenfell Tower fire and other major fires during construction projects, a UK Government inquiry has significantly highlighted fire retardance, or lack thereof, of some products used within the Construction Industry.

As a result more Clients are specifying fireproof or fire retardant products are used on building sites, especially for larger public refurbishment projects. Increasingly, more and more companies in the UK have started to use system scaffolding. However, many still have huge stocks of tube and fittings; utilising timber scaffold boards, the price of which

is rapidly increasing as a Global shortage of all wood products means timber merchants are struggling to meet demand. Steel boards provide a safer, stronger, sustainable and fireproof solution; eliminating the need to replace wooden boards over and over and over again. This equates to huge savings, which equals a more cost effective solution.



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**WOOD, YOU?**



**SE1 outlines why these issues are important to the sector and highlights some quick wins relating to energy, waste, people, culture, communication, travel, fleet, logistics, material and operations** 

of NASC members including scaffolding contractors, health and safety professionals and HSE representation, recently put together its first Safety and Environmental guidance note SE1 Becoming Net Zero Carbon which is available via the NASC eportal.

This easy-to-follow guidance acts as an introduction to companies looking to address the ethical, legal and commercial factors which will apply to scaffolding businesses large and small. It is a live document which will be reviewed regularly and updated to ensure it remains relevant and up to date.

SE1 outlines why these issues are important to the scaffolding sector and highlights some “quick wins” relating to energy, waste, people, culture, communication, travel, fleet, logistics, materials and operations which can help meet company goals and client requirements by reducing both energy and material waste, costs and ultimately reducing their carbon footprint.

# Making it sustainable

The NASC is helping the scaffolding sector reduce its carbon footprint

**NASC is committed to supporting** member companies and the wider scaffolding industry in realising the importance of becoming more environmentally aware and working towards implementing a Net Zero Carbon policy. NASC members are also keen to get on board with new innovations, with several already implementing the use of

solar energy, electric vehicles, and biomass-derived fuels.

Newly appointed NASC President David Brown (IBN Scaffold Access Ltd) highlighted this in his inaugural speech, making carbon neutrality one of the Confederation's main objectives whilst he is in post.

The NASC Health and Safety Committee, consisting

 **NASC and its members are working to reduce their carbon footprint**

## **Incentives to reduce emissions**

The guidance also includes a draft policy statement template and other sources of useful information including grants and incentives available when look to reduce emissions.

Working parties are currently being set up for the development of

- SE2 Guide to ESOS and ►

# 300

NASC held its 2023 regional meetings online meaning 300 journeys were prevented

SECR – Environmental Savings Opportunity Scheme and Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

- SE3 Guide to eliminating and reducing waste in yards and on site – this will tie in with existing guidance SG40 Yard operations
- S34 Guide to reduction in transport emissions

Keen to practice what they preach the NASC Winter/Spring 2023 round of five regional meetings took place online in a bid to reduce its carbon footprint.

Dave Mosley NASC managing director said: “Holding the meetings virtually has led to at least 300



▲ SE1: new NASC guidance on becoming net zero

people's journeys not taking place – including the NASC staff who would normally travel the length and breadth of the country in order to cover the five regions.”

NASC president, David Brown of IBN Scaffold Access said: “Improving the organisation and membership's sustainability all starts with small steps and this decision to hold the Spring regionals virtually is one of those small steps.

“The carbon emissions saving has also contributed to a significant cost and time saving, for NASC staff and members alike. These are little wins in the big picture, but wins

**Holding the meetings virtually has led to at least 300 peoples' journeys not taking place – including the NASC staff who would normally travel the length and breadth of the country**

**Dave Mosley,**  
NASC managing director



none the less. And it all helps in our mission towards net zero.”

For an industry too often considered resistant to change the scaffolding sector and the NASC are making some very real and positive progress in helping the construction industry on the road to net zero. ●



## Safe working at height week

The campaign which aims to spread the message of safe working at height returns in November 2023

Working at height carries with it inherent dangers. And when accidents do happen, they can be serious.

That's why Safe Working At Height Week was launched in November 2022. It's a major new initiative bringing together the professionals from across the built environment, trade bodies, and government policy-makers, to highlight the key issues surrounding both current practice and future developments in safe working at height.

Safe Working At Height Week returns this year during 6-12 November 2023. During the week, there will be digital events and published content on safe working at height topics, including webinars, articles, technical resources, surveys, social media campaigns, and more. All this will be promoted to around 60,000 construction professionals.

Safe Working at Height Week is supported by the Association for Project Safety (APS), Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), and the National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC).

**Construction's biggest killer**  
While falls from height accounted for 20% of non-fatal injuries to construction

workers in 2020/21, they result in a much higher proportion of fatal injuries.

In fact, falls from height were still the main cause of construction workplace deaths in 2020/21. Of 40 fatal accidents during that year, 21 involved a fall from height – that's more than half of all deaths in the sector.

### Campaign aims

- To spread the message of safe working at height to all built environment audiences
- To highlight the need to continue to focus on this critical issue to government policy makers
- To showcase the use of new technologies and innovations to make people safer at work
- To identify and disseminate best practice
- To gauge current attitudes among built environment professionals to safe working at height

You can get involved at <https://safeworkingatheightweek.com/>



[safeworkingatheightweek.com](https://safeworkingatheightweek.com)



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# Best in class

From people to projects, innovation and safety, the annual NASC Awards recognises the best in the scaffolding industry. Meet the winners.

► Swaithe Viaduct was a challenging contract

▼ Cantilever work off pierr walls impressed judges



## Project of the Year Small project

**Infrastructure Site Services:**

**Swaithe Viaduct, Barnsley**

**Main contractor: Story Contracting**

Swaithe Viaduct had suffered from years of neglect, resulting in line speeds being reduced and ultimately the need for repair.

The bridge is a 10-span structure with extremely limited access to eight of the spans. Infrastructure Site Services (ISS) provided birdcage and encapsulation, underslung and cantilevered scaffolds as well as providing access from the ground, an external walkway and loading bays.

The project presented ISS with a number of challenges including unstable ground conditions, the client's requirement for a Niko track to be incorporated to the full length of the walkway – overcome by ISS's bespoke bogey and runway system, and a change in hanging detail owing to badly corroded steelwork.

This project stands out for the work involved in erecting complex scaffolds to a bridge that is "on the skew" throughout.

The judges commented: "Excellent cantilever work off pier walls, and exceptional use of tube and fitting on the viaduct. Dramatic manual handling reduction with use of ISS 'Bogey' was seen as a key factor in ISS being crowned the winner of NASC Project of the Year."

## Medium project

### JDC: The Annexe Building, Smithfield, London

Main contractor: McLaughlin & Harvey

The Annexe Building was built between 1886 and 1899 and comprises two main buildings; the Red House, which was one of the first cold stores in the world, and the triangular Fish Market.

JDC was contracted to enable restoration works to make the building safe, clean the external masonry, replace internal timbers, replace the roof coverings and alter the internal layouts. Scaffolding works comprised external independent scaffolds, temporary roofs, bridged birdcages to the existing arcades, full-length access to the existing roof lanterns and temporary bracing and supports to the existing trusses.

The project highlighted JDC's design capabilities and the depth of its engineering knowledge. The design development was an intense process with a very large design team – often with many different ideas.

The parameters for both vertical and horizontal loadings, set out in

- ▶ The HMS Victory
- ▼ The Annexe Building at Smithfield



**“A magnificent project delivered very much in the public eye.”**  
Judging panel

many areas looked unachievable, but with time and the knowledge of the team most issues were solved.

“JDC Scaffolding has collaborated with many stakeholders and the works are without a doubt the largest overall scheme in this category with many complex challenges to overcome. JDC demonstrated well the intricate detail of the complexities and design decisions that came with this project.”

## Large project

### PHD Modular Access Services: HMS Victory, Historic dockland Portsmouth

Main contractor: National Museum of the Royal Navy

The HMS Victory, one of the world's best-loved ships and national treasures, is embarking on a hugely significant conservation milestone as the ship's rotten outer shell is removed and replaced with new oak. Repairs will be made to the ship's structural framework, and she will be fully re-rigged, in a process lasting 10 to 15 years and costing £35m. For this work to be carried out the ship

needed to be fully enclosed by temporary scaffolding.

The scaffold structure to enable the renovation works is a combination of temporary roof protection, semi-enclosed visitor experience, working access platforms and enclosed loading bays. The temporary roof is also a further combination of Layher and Dessa systems to accommodate the ship's existing infrastructure and mast retaining cables, whilst they remain in position during Stage 1 works.

The HMS Victory is an extremely complex shape that required a 3D design. PHD's design team created a 3D concept to design out any risks and show the client what the scheme would look like before it was built.

The judges commented: “PHD Modular Access fully addressed the category requirements including social value, and information on the collaborative nature of the project. A magnificent project delivered very much in the public eye. A truly outstanding accomplishment from PHD and deserved NASC Project of the Year winner.” ▶







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**Paul Casey** | Managing Director, PDC Scaffolding Ltd

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◀ Louie Peebles  
▶ Kaefer Mental Health First Aiders

**Apprentice of the Year  
Louie Peebles,  
JMAC Scaffolding**

Dubbed by his employers a “bright young man” Louie Peebles chose scaffolding because he wanted to be able to use his natural skills for problem-solving and wanted to work in an industry where people were committed to working hard.

“Louie always takes feedback on board positively. If he makes a mistake, he corrects it and takes the learning on board,” his entry noted. The judges commented: “Louie’s positive attitude, enthusiasm and diligence did not go unnoticed by the directors of JMAC who were impressed by his attitude and appetite for hard work. Louie isn’t solely focussed on his own development either. He proactively helps others around him and is already an asset to the company.”



“Shield went beyond NASC guidance and most workplace standards”  
Judging panel

▼ Shield has many SHE initiatives



**H&S award  
Small, Shield Services Group**

The judges were impressed by the company’s noise exposure monitoring and control system which demonstrated a commitment not to simply meet compliance standards but to genuinely improve occupational safety by adopting bespoke processes.

Shield embarked on a project to effectively measure, monitor and control noise exposure to all of its operatives with a comprehensive and evidence based approach and develop effective risk assessments and control measures that would be easy to understand for all operatives.

It selected a variety of projects and tasks to carry out the measurements collecting a vast amount of data that demonstrated environmental factors have a significant impact on occupational noise exposure and the pre-existing risk profile for noise did not fully address the nuances of varied workplaces found in the Scaffolding Industry.

Results of our monitoring helped inform risk assessments and led to procuring more effective hearing protection for the level of noise exposure expected in worst-case scenarios.

Shield’s ‘Second Chance Initiative’ also impressed. It offers employment opportunities to a local prison facility to returning citizens ahead of their

release to aid their rehabilitation. This initiative proof of the company’s value of investing in people by offering a second chance. It showed team members there is another way to do scaffolding where safety culture and quality workmanship is not just respected but encouraged and prioritised.

“Shield demonstrated active mentoring with a clear benefit of improving a SHE culture, going beyond even NASC guidance and most workplace standards. Noise exposure monitoring was particularly impressive to the judges.”

**Large, Kaefer**

Kaefer trained 5% of its 3000 workforce as Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA). The MHFA gained a greater understanding of mental health and wellbeing, and gave them the tools to recognise common triggers of mental ill health and signs that someone may need support.

The training attendees included KAEFER UK & Ireland HSEQ Director Attia Ramzan and several senior managers, demonstrating that the leadership team was fully behind this initiative of improving Mental Health and Wellbeing within our business.

The objective of reaching 5% of its workforce was achieved with the 133 new MH Champions, soon to be 149, joining the existing 42 ▶



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trained MHFA, resulting in a total of 191 trained personnel by the end of October 2022: 6.4% of the total UK & Ireland workforce.

The training was held in local hotels to ensure attendees were not distracted by their daily site duties. Feedback from the training was requested from the attendees and the communications received were extremely positive “A great range of VAC evidence provided, and excellent that Kaefer not only recognises support is needed for Mental Health First Aider training but the method and results were first class. The senior leadership team is clearly prepared to listen and take action.”

► Proud employees of GKR Scaffolding – the first scaffolding contractor to become carbon neutral

▼ Layher's Twix Beam



**Innovation award  
Layher Twix Beam**

Layher's Twixbeam provides contractors with a light but high load-bearing beam with no welded profiles. The product integrates with existing Layher Allround & Flexbeam systems and offer multiple uses in construction/street-work scaffolding, industrial scaffolding and falsework formwork scaffolding, as well as heavy duty suspension technique.

“This was a great example of product development. This is an overdue addition to the industry and could be replicated by other systems. It was a fabulous presentation from a very innovative NASC member.”



**Presidents award  
Winner – GKR Scaffolding**

GKR Scaffolding Ltd became the first scaffolding specialist in the UK to become carbon neutral. The company commissioned Engie to conduct a full external audit of its carbon footprint and put in place a roadmap to become Net Zero Carbon by December 2023.

GKR identified that the majority of its emissions are classed as Scope 1 Emissions, which means that 295 tCO2e (83% of their total emissions) were derived directly from operations on-site and through their logistics. Furthermore, 63% of GKR's carbon emissions were

**Becoming carbon neutral was just their first milestone. They are leading the way in making the industry consider its own footprint via a variety of projects**



attributed to its fleet of lorries. To counter this, GKR now uses HVO fuel on the whole HGV fleet.

To reduce Scope 2 emissions, which include the indirect emissions from purchased power, GKR switched to renewable electricity in its offices and facilities. Being certified as Carbon Neutral in line with PAS 2060 recognises the significant reduction GKR has made in Scope 1 and 2 Emissions, with the remaining 93 tCO2e balanced by offsets.

The judges commented: “GKR Scaffolding became the first scaffolding specialist in the UK to become carbon neutral. This was just their first milestone. They are clearly leading the way in making the scaffolding industry consider its own footprint via a variety of projects.” ●



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# ‘This business is in our blood’

Specialist scaffolding contractor, Millcroft, is celebrating 50 years in business. We speak to managing director, Billy Jones, about the history of its growth and the secrets behind the company’s success

**Millcroft has grown from a small operator to the scaffolding contractor behind prestigious projects such as the Queen’s Chapel, the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College and the Supreme Courts of Justice. Founded in 1972 by Roy Jones, a time served bricklayer, the Greenwich-based specialist contractor is now run by**

Roy’s sons Billy and Sam, with Billy as managing director.

**Grit and dedication**

Billy started working for the business at the age of 14, labouring in the yard during the school holidays. “By the time I finished my A-Levels at 18, I was keen to start work properly for the business,” he says.

▲ Keeping it in the family left to right: Roy, Sam and Billy Jones

**Our experience and specialist knowledge has seen us win and deliver a number of contracts for HS2**

Billy Jones



But there was no room for nepotism he says. “I knew I was very lucky to have the opportunity to work for a successful family company, so I felt I almost had more to prove. I trained as a scaffolder and completed my advanced scaffolding course; I also obtained a Gold CISRS Scaffolding Supervisor card. I worked hard on site and enjoyed the variety of projects in different locations across London. One of my very first jobs was working on Shakespeare’s Globe, which is one I will always remember.

**Prestigious portfolio**

Millcroft’s client portfolio today is extensive. “We’ve delivered some really memorable projects in my 26 years at the company; our highlights include the Queen’s Chapel, the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College just down the road from us in Greenwich, and the Supreme Courts of Justice – that was pretty special.”

One of Millcroft’s first areas of growth in the 1980s was supporting the emergency response following the Iranian Embassy siege; as well as the St Mary Axe and Bishopgate bombings in the early 1990s. “We were also called to work on the aftermath of the London 7/7 attacks in 2005. We’ve worked a lot on dangerous structures damaged by fire, extreme weather and explosions – and that comes from experience and clients’ trust in us,” says Billy.

One of Millcroft’s longest client relationships is with engineering

# 50

Specialist scaffolding contractor, Millcroft, is celebrating 50 years in business

company, Costain, who it has worked with for more than 40 years. Throughout its years in business, the company has grown its portfolio of projects into a number of different sectors including utilities, power and rail. "HS2, for example, is the biggest rail project in Europe, and our experience and specialist knowledge in the sector has seen us successfully win and deliver a number of important contracts for the project. We've become a pivotal partner in long-term joint ventures at Euston station, on HS2 Central and at the Colne Valley Viaduct - a section of the route between Hillingdon and the M25."

### Nurturing staff

"The quality of our work speaks for itself. We don't profess to be the biggest specialist contractor there is, but we certainly are one of the best. We are a family business but our entire team is part of that family.

"As many will testify in the construction sector, it can be extremely difficult to find good staff. So, we really look after our own. We help nurture and grow their skills and provide career progression opportunities to ensure we maintain a solid and motivated workforce. We have a very low staff turnover because we invest in our people.

We have a Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)-approved training centre on site, which is a huge asset and separates us from the competition.

### Changing landscape

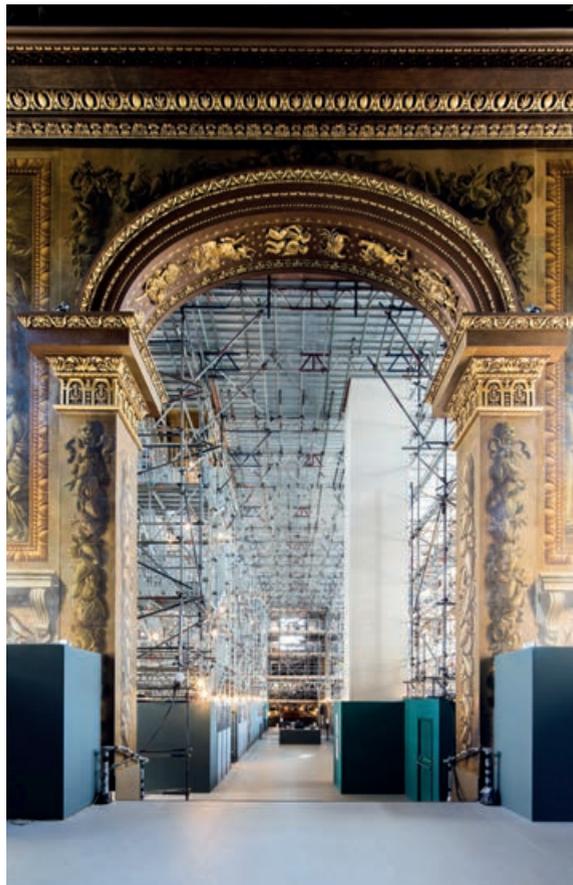
The most obvious of changes in our industry in the last 50 years would be around health and safety

I remember when it became best practice for scaffolders to wear a harness on site. Before that, you had to rely on your cat-like



◀ Left: Space House, Holborn – Grade II listed building being restored and converted into state of the art office space.

▼ The Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College



balance to stay safe. You can't even imagine that now. The industry has undertaken a lot of really important work to ensure everyone goes home safely at the end of each working day. As a company, we are committed to every change and improvement to health and safety.

We've also invested significantly in our commitment to net zero - changing the way we operate and investing in a new electric and hybrid fleet so we are compliant to the clean air zone regulations in London. Sustainability is not a quick fix, but we are devoted to making the effort to creating a greener environment, and that starts with making tangible changes for a measurable impact.

### The next 50?

The construction industry has revolutionised in the past 50 years; with the emergence of technology, health and safety advances and huge investment to improve infrastructure. As a company, we're often ahead of the game when it comes to making changes to adapt to our evolving landscape. But our core, traditional values remain the same. We are a local, family business which takes care of each other and our customers, and we're passionate about what we do. I was born about a three-minute walk away from our headquarters in Greenwich. This part of London, and this business, is in our blood. ●

[www.millcroft.co.uk](http://www.millcroft.co.uk)



Who do you trust?

# Investors in people

Manchester's Old Town Hall is the largest scaffolding contract the industry has seen. But by far the biggest win for Lyndon SGB has been the shift its made in social value policies as a result of working on the project.



**The £300 million refurbishment** and partial restoration of the Grade I-listed Manchester Town Hall by Lendlease is one of the largest construction sites in Europe and currently the UK's biggest single scaffolding contract. Work began in December 2019 with completion due December 2023 – allowing Lendlease contractors to access 34 chimneys, the three main towers and the rest of the structure requiring renovation works.

The scaffolding contract is in the region of £10-12m – more akin to an industrial project. It required a complex design and challenging erection issues for Lyndon SGB who currently have more than

50 scaffolders, working on more than 200 scaffold structures – independents, birdcages, beam sections, staircases, chimney scaffolds, and temporary roofing.

## Sourcing skilled labour

While large projects are familiar to Lyndon SGB – it has worked on Glasgow School of Arts, London's Coal Drops Yard and Edinburgh Castle – sourcing the labour for the 'Our Town Hall' project was a challenge. The problems it faced are echoed industry-wide: sourcing a skilled workforce.

Social value is one of the Manchester County Council's

▲ The Old Town Hall project in Manchester



**We had to find 12 apprentices locally as part of the contract and from some of the most deprived areas of Manchester"**

Jon Cooke

KPIs as well as fundamental to Lendlease. Delivering apprenticeships forms part of its approach to creating social value for communities and it has created over 100 apprenticeships so far at the project.

These requirements put extra pressure on labour sourcing for Lyndon SGB, as regional manager Jon Cooke explains. "We had to find 12 apprentices locally as part of the contract and from some of the most deprived areas of Manchester. Finding labour isn't the problem but finding quality labour is. There just aren't the skill sets as well as a huge lack of a work ethic." ►

**90** Ten years ago we held on to about 10-15% of apprentices. Now it's 90%



**We engage with the whole person, sharing in their lives and interests as well as beyond the work. We encourage them to let us get to know them and we give them more time and more responsibility**

Jon Cooke, SGB



As a solution the company created a rigorous and strict apprenticeship assessment process involving a three month assessment and four month training programme. It also worked in the community to engage young people and make the industry appealing to them. It worked with local Withenshawe College to develop courses.

Cooke says one of the reasons for that success is that it works with the person. Lyndon SGB now has 64 mental health first aiders and line managers regularly check in with apprentices.

"We engage with the whole person, sharing in their lives and interests beyond the work. We encourage them to let us get to them know and we give them more time and more responsibility."

Lyndon SGB also worked with a local prison sourcing offenders on day release. One young man cycles from the prison daily to the yard. Cooke interviewed him several

times at the institution before employing him on full pay. It was a risk but it has paid off, says Cooke. "It was a leap of faith but the reward is so great. It has reaped huge dividends."

Cooke praises his attitude saying his work ethic is "second to none". The young man (who can't be named) has gained skills and qualifications including CSCS card, forklift and saw training and imminently his HGV licence.

The firm also has a social value administrator who visited local schools using spaghetti and marshmallow to demonstrate scaffolding to pupils.

The branch also spent a day volunteering at a local charity,

▼ Some of the statistics arising out of Lyndon SGB's work on OTH

becoming part of the circular economy. The charity was upcycling wood from the Manchester Velodrome to be made into coffee tables and Lyndon staff helped repurposing pallets into designer cladding for interiors.

It has also been involved with Fair Share – a charity which takes supermarket food waste past sell-by date and redistributes it to food banks.

**The business case**

So having been contractually obliged to adopt social value initiatives Lyndon SGB is now one of its biggest proponents.

"It gives back to the community," says Cooke. "If you'd asked me two or three years ago if there would be a business benefit I'd have said no. But once you start to deliver it you see the benefits. It scores highly on future bids: we've bid on other jobs – such as The Factory project – where they see the social value work we've done. And even small projects ask for it now: a £30k order recently asked for local apprentices to be used.

"We now get regular enquiries about apprentices with people knocking on our door. That's unheard of previously. And all because we are investing in our apprentices by interacting with them as people. Our retention was poor in the past because no one took the time to engage with the apprentices. Now we do and it's so rewarding. Ten years ago we held on to about 10-15% of apprentices. Now it's 90%.

"Social value used to be a tick box exercise," says Cooke, "but now it's a really valid policy: the more you put in, the more you get out." ●



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# Scaffolding specification: what you need to know

What are the main considerations you need to make before appointing a scaffolding contractor?



Here is five of the main criteria you should look out for when appointing a scaffolding contractor to make sure the relationship between client, contractor and scaffolding contractor runs as smoothly as possible:

**Competence:** A reputable scaffolding contractor should operate under auditable processes, have a recorded training scheme and be full members of the NASC. They need to make sure they have at least £10m

of employers' liability insurance in place, as well as £5m for public liability. They also need to demonstrate that their employees have the right level of competency.

**Design:** Where more complex scaffolding solutions are required, the design has to be provided by a competent scaffolding designer and the appropriate design standard followed. That means ensuring that the scaffolding system is strong and stable enough throughout the project. Designers also need to think about the risks involved in erecting and dismantling the structures and design them to eliminate as much of this risk as possible. Copies of the design must be issued to users or clients for acceptance and sign-off and held on site before any work commences, and there should also be a system in place for managing design variations should they arise.

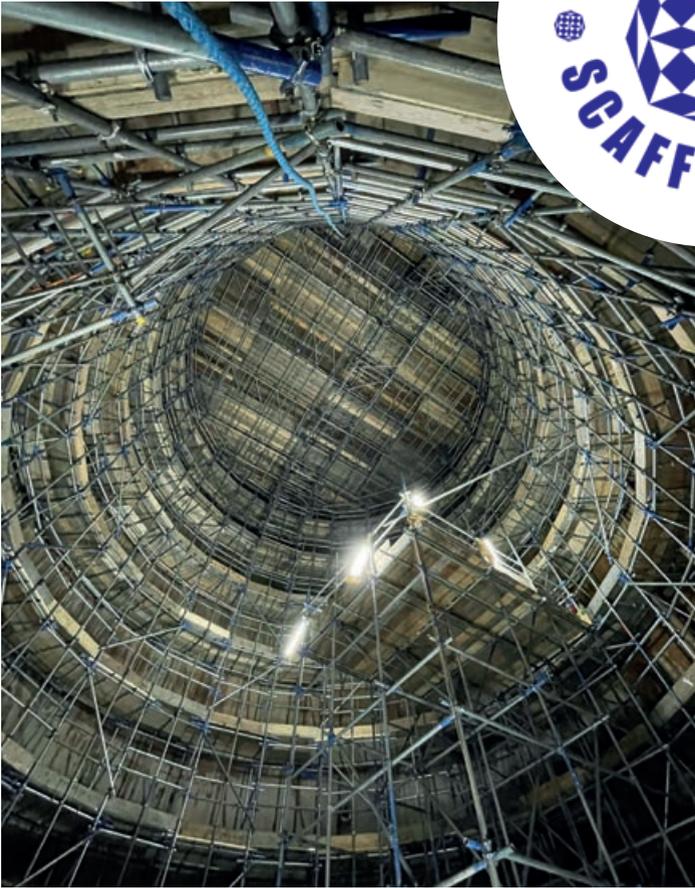
**Early involvement:** Clients need to be able to provide full information to scaffolding contractors on what is required. The type of information needed includes: board width, the length and height of the scaffold, the number of lifts needed and

the lift height, the length of the hire period, as well as any adaptations needed. To that end, many scaffolding contractors and main contractors alike recommend collaboration as early as possible in the process.

**Handover and inspection:** While a competent employee of the scaffolding contractor will inspect the completed scaffold for compliance with regulations and codes of practice before handover, scaffolds also need to undergo a regular seven-day inspection regime. This is the responsibility of the contractor/user, rather than the scaffolder. If the contractor does not have a competent person who has attended a nationally recognised scaffold inspection training course, then the contractor will need to engage the scaffolding contractor to carry out this duty on their behalf, which should be by a separate instruction to the main contract.

**Risk assessment:** Before work commences, the contractor and scaffolding contractor need to work together to produce a job- and site-specific risk assessment in writing for each individual scaffold structure. ●

	<p><b>Guiding hand</b> To assist principal contractors and contractors in appointing scaffolding contractors, the NASC has created the NASC Guide to Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor, a comprehensive management guide which is</p>	<p>available for free download via the NASC website. This 20-page document includes information on competence, minimum scaffolding requirements, regulations, codes of practice and best practice. The NASC has also published a go-to</p>	<p>reference guide - SG39:21 <b>Guidance on Appointing a Scaffolding Contractor</b> – to be used in conjunction with the management guide. This document provides simple and accessible assistance on a range of principal contractor responsibilities, including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Monitoring of scaffolding operations during erection/modification/dismantle</b></li> <li>● <b>Scaffolding design, calculations and risk assessment/method statement (RAMS)</b></li> <li>● <b>Scaffolding inspections and handover.</b></li> </ul>
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At Esher Scaffolding Group Limited we are working and collaborating with some great clients not only on the simple but more complex scaffolding projects within the building and utility sectors over the last few years and are successfully growing stronger year on year through the relationship and the reliable reputation the Esher Team have established and are continuing to develop.

Kevin Withers MD at Esher Scaffolding believes that the evolving success of the business is our team! We are a people based company focused on maintaining not only our industry high standards but the established pride within our skilled and diverse team for what they do and what we collectively produce, safely, and to our customers timescales and budgets here at Esher Scaffolding Group Limited.

# Pushing the envelope

The products that are advancing safety, access and education

► Right: Layher's Twixbeam



**Benchmark Scaffolding Ltd** has expanded its mobile Benchmark App, adding work instructions for additional works. The signed proposed works will go straight to main office, the principal contractor will then sign in agreement, all communication taking place digitally and recorded. Benchmark has also added harness inspections to the App system, meaning all harnesses are inspected and signed by the inspector every month with no paperwork involved.

**Lyndon SGB introduced QuickDeck** to the UK market in 2022. It is a suspended access system designed to improve productivity and safety, reduce cost and save time. It

provides a flush suspended working platform effectively providing a factory floor environment in the air. One of the big advantages of the system is how the framework is progressively erected. Once a starter platform is formed each subsequent bay framework is erected directly

▲ Above: GuardAid Tool from StepUp Scaffolding

▼ Below: Lyndon SGB's QuickDeck



adjacent to the existing platform and then swung out and rotated into position and locked off before being decked out and guardrails fitted.

**Layher's Twixbeam** provides contractors with a light but high load bearing beam with no welded profiles. The product integrates with existing Layher Allround & Flexbeam systems and offer multiple uses in construction/street-work scaffolding, industrial scaffolding and falsework formwork scaffolding, as well as heavy duty suspension technique.

**StepUp Scaffolding UK's GuardAid** Tool, a scaffold positioning tool, enables scaffold configurations to be erected without the risk of fall from height. The erection process ensures that the permanent guardrail is fitted before the platform is installed, and before the scaffolder ascends to the next working lift. The use of GuardAid Tool also ensures the scaffold structure is automatically braced.

**PHD Modular Access Services Ltd** has developed a modified version of the Minecraft game to attract the next generation. Using bespoke assets it enabled modified elements within the game to build structures that resemble scaffolding. The result was toured around schools to great success. ►

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## They said it couldn't be done

Scaffold Innovation at Hinkley Point C made a challenging access issue possible



▲ Above: PHD Modular Access's adaptation of Minecraft

**Altrad UK developed an e-learning module** format linked to a learning management system. It removed the reliance on trainer-led, classroom-based training which reduces cost, time and loss of productivity. The bespoke learner-lead, e-learning modular content is offered via a gamified, learning experience platform easily scheduled around any downtime.

**Ideal Scaffolding (Southern) Ltd's** Ideal Cantilever eliminates traditional grounded standards and relies on the integrity of the building façade for all vertical and horizontal support.

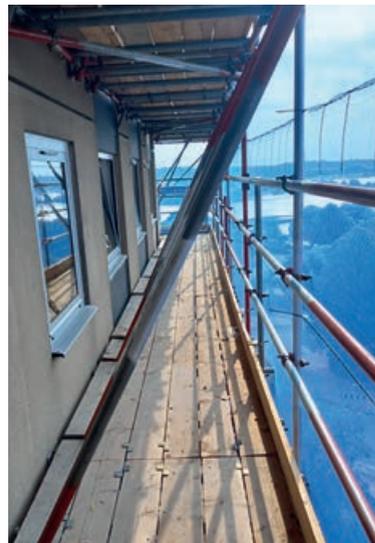
It can be used to negate traditional beam-work spans and associated issues surrounding heavy duty tower foundations. It could be introduced to any area or level of the façade, using powered access, at any frequency, given each decked lift is self-supporting.

**PERI's new and improved modular** façade scaffolding system Evotop is an evolution of the PERI UP Easy system, which was one of the

first façade system scaffolds to integrate the advanced guardrail feature in 2016.

With EVOTOP, PERI can offer customers solutions for all bay lengths, widths, and load classes, as it has the strength of a frame system and the flexibility of a modular system. ●

▼ Below: Ideal Scaffolding's Ideal Cantilever



▲ Above: Big Carl, the world's largest crane was needed to lift the suspended scaffold

Designing, building, and installing a suspended scaffold for Hinkley Point C sounded impossible, Access was needed to enable the welding the equipment hatch onto the nuclear island inner containment liner at Hinkley Point C. KAEFER created a bespoke design minimising the need to work at height. "We designed the scaffold so it could be built on ground level and then be lifted into position, focusing on buildability," explained Thomas Hurst, KAEFER's Temporary Works Coordinator and Designer for the Hinkley Point C site.

"Our innovative design allowed for critical path works on site to be replanned, allowing for early installation of the liner, a significant milestone for the client. The site team then ensured the scaffold was erected safely and professionally in a challenging reactive environment."

KAEFER's ability to be flexible to support the client allowed completion of the scaffold over a Bank Holiday, ensuring the clients programme could be met. The hatch was originally intended to be installed prior to the 47m wide ring being lifted into position but doing so would have delayed a critical element of the build project. "We proposed the suspended scaffold design to allow the project to continue on schedule, other contractors had said it couldn't be done but we were confident we could design and build a safe, access system to meet the clients' requirements," said Thomas.

The final installation of the scaffold utilised the worlds largest crane, Big Carl, to lift the suspended scaffold which was erected at ground level approximately 270 metres away, and to place it into position 35m high in the liner. As well as providing access solutions at Hinkley Point C, industrial services specialist KAEFER is responsible for delivering the containment liner coatings: surface protection for concrete in the internal building rooms of both nuclear reactors, and supplying high grade steel ducting for the nuclear island HVAC systems.

#ItHasToBeNASC



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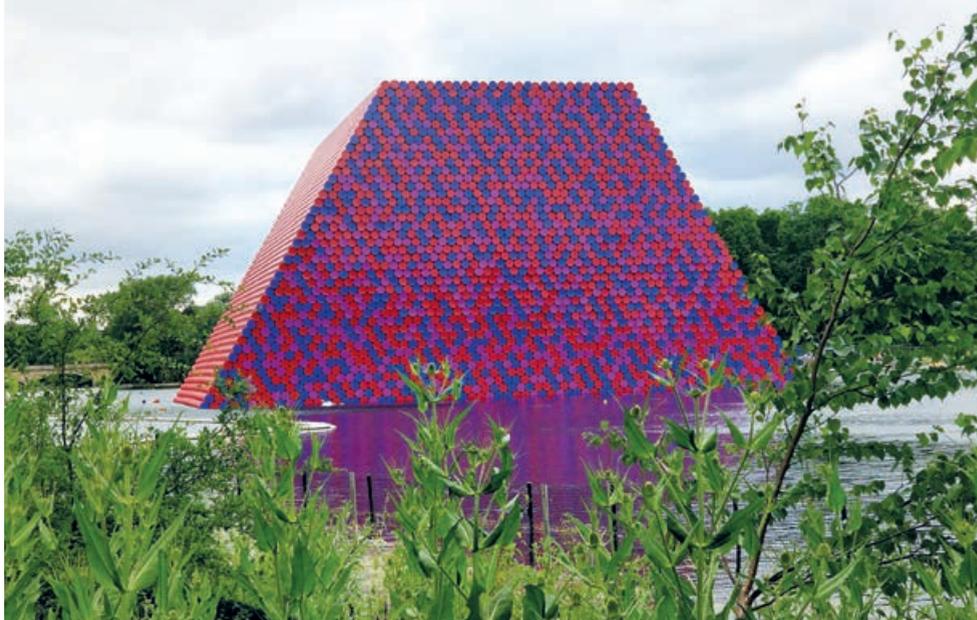
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# Going beyond

Three recent unorthodox uses of scaffolding



## ◀ Floating challenge

Coventry Scaffolding worked with world-renowned artist, Christo, in his first major work in Britain, the majestic Mastaba. Floating on the Serpentine in London's Hyde Park, the enormous structure, formed of 7,506 horizontally stacked barrels, required the scaffolding team to spend a month in Bulgaria (the artist's native country) to work on a third-sized version of the Mastaba on the Black Sea to trial the soundness of the design before beginning on its larger counterpart in London.

A 100-strong project team built the 40m x 30m x 20m pyramid on the Serpentine. It took over two months to complete and was super technically challenging as Christo wanted the barrels to look like they were floating on the water, so the scaffolding couldn't be visible above the water line.



## ▶ Turning site on its head

Architecture collective Figure used scaffolding and netted fabric typically found on construction sites to create a theatrically shaded courtyard at Craft Contemporary in Los Angeles. The temporary installation, called Veil Craft, is designed to look just like the many building sites that can be found in the area but unlike a development site, this structure invites members of the public to come inside and discover an "unexpected pocket park" where they can sit down, engage in conversation or watch performances. Tarps have been used to create shade and seclusion rather than as a barrier to prevent entry.

## ◀ Modular market

Czech architects Chybik + Kristof completed a pop-up marketplace in Prague with a modular structure of pastel-blue scaffolding that can be easily modified or relocated. The project was the third in a series of temporary food markets in the city. It was built by reusing and adapting materials from the previous iteration in Smichov, which was also designed by Chybik + Kristof.

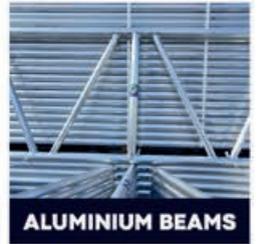




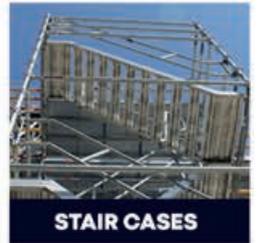
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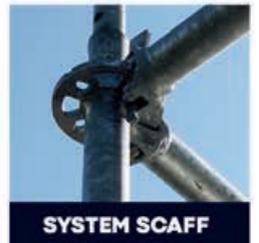
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