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CIBSE Journal is written and produced by CPL (Cambridge Publishers Ltd) Tel: +44 (0)1223477411. [www.cpl.co.uk](http://www.cpl.co.uk)  
 275 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8JE.

**Editorial copy deadline:** First day of the month preceding the publication month

**Printed by:** Warners Midlands PLC

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 © CIBSE Services Ltd. ISSN 1759-846X

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The 2013 US annual subscription price is £100. Airfreight and mailing in the US by Air Business, C/O Worldnet Shipping NY Inc, C/O Air Business Ltd / 155-11 146th Street, Jamaica, New York, NY 11434. Periodical postage pending at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to CIBSE Journal, C/O Air Business Ltd / 155-11 146th Street, Jamaica, New York, NY 11434.

Cover image: Anthony Bradshaw / Getty Images



ABC audited circulation:  
 18,920 January to  
 December 2014



# Winning teams

Despite building services engineers being in the best position to advise on low carbon design, their voice often does not get heard by those who stand to gain the most from their skill and knowledge, such as architects, clients and building occupiers. That is not the case with property company Low Carbon Workplace (LCW). It recognises that the early involvement of the M&E consultant in the design is crucial to the success of its business strategy.

LCW is a partnership between the Carbon Trust, fund manager Threadneedle and Stanhope. It had the idea of increasing the value of worn-out office buildings by refurbishing them to high environmental standards. LCW acquires the buildings and is landlord to tenants attracted to the new-look buildings.

The business model has to work financially as well as environmentally, and LCW realises that for the building to guarantee low energy bills to tenants it needs a building services expert to give it a holistic view on the design and operation of the building. LCW's policy is to look at passive design first, which means it is especially important for the services engineer to work with the architect on the building envelope.

Skelly and Couch worked on Mansel Court in Wimbledon with architect Duggan Morris. It was able to argue that the direct cooling of exposed concrete ceilings would provide the thermal mass needed to reduce cooling loads. It also had a hand in devising simple-to-use controls to ensure tenants used the building as the design intended. Mansel Court illustrates perfectly why focusing on environmental design is good for a building owner's balance sheet as well as its corporate social responsibility (see page 40).

“Mansel Court illustrates why focusing on environmental design is good for the balance sheet

Last month's Technical Symposium was a full house and an inspiring two days. We will cover the event in more detail next month, but to whet your appetite we have a summary of Ashley Bateson's excellent talk on ventilating residential developments in London (page 27). The Hoare Lea partner explained why planners, Part L and property agents are driving designers away from passive to active ventilation. It's a sobering example of how real-life scenarios get in the way of the best of low carbon intentions.

In the autumn, the fifth Symposium on Lift and Escalator Technologies takes place. On page 22 Adam Scott discusses new EU rules that will affect building services engineers working in lifts and beyond.

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