

REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS: THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

If we stand a chance of stopping climate breakdown¹, the construction industry must radically rethink, rebalance and reshape its activities to reduce its carbon footprint² dramatically



23%

World's greenhouse gas³ emission are from construction. 10% of the UK's carbon emissions are from construction

Over production of greenhouse gases (including carbon emissions) heats up the Earth's atmosphere

30%

Global resource consumption is from construction materials and the building sector. The construction industry accounts for 60% of all materials used in the UK

Humans are using the Earth's resources too fast - resource extraction produces carbon emissions, biodiversity loss and water stress

Key ways to avoid construction and reduce carbon emissions: **STOP unnecessary demolition** and follow sustainable construction⁴ principles

Principles for sustainable construction:

1. Reuse if possible, avoid demolition e.g. retrofitting⁵ existing buildings
2. Use existing recycled materials
3. Sustainable materials are essential
4. Construction should be flexible i.e. able to change purpose over time

Retrofitting should always be prioritised over demolition

Benefits of retrofitting:

- + Old buildings repurposed for new needs
- + Protect local heritage
- + Less emissions from construction improving air quality
- + Reduce energy usage and waste

What about housing demand?

First look to the existing, unused stock!

20,000+

Empty homes in London

24,000+

Empty commercial buildings in London

- ¹Climate breakdown - serious and harmful changes in the world's weather resulting from human activity
²Carbon footprint - amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) released into the atmosphere by a sector/community
³Greenhouse gases - a gas that contributes to the heating of our planet
⁴Sustainable construction - construction methods using renewable/recyclable resources, reducing environmental impacts
⁵Retrofitting - upgrading systems and structures within existing buildings