

Please indicate the environmental factors you have taken in consideration of when you have sourced and disposed of materials and products

Our organisation has long understood that architects can significantly influence the impact that construction has on the environment. This influence has many strands and at AHR we try to address them all through the way we source and specify our building products and materials.

Our starting point is a database of material and product specifications – developed over time by AHR and now hosted on the 'NBS 'Create' platform. This BIM-enabled platform provides us with a robust repository for all our material choices and ensures that no matter where the AHR office is, it has a consistent approach and immediate access to reliable specifications. Our database considers the environmental factors affecting sourcing and disposal in the following ways:

Time-tested reliability

AHR has been in practice for 80+ years and have helped procure hundreds of thousands of building projects. We know what products work. Reliability of service is a key driver for us – particularly when assessing environmental impact, since replacement parts generate waste. We only recommend using products with a demonstrable service life and we specify materials in order that the overall element to which it contributes achieves BS 7543 Maintenance level 2.

Locally sourced materials

Whilst AHR is a national practice we have a local agenda. We understand the sustainable benefits that locally sourced products bring – not just to a project – but to the local economy and to the Clients carbon footprint. We are happy to work with a Client's local agenda and have demonstrated this most recently in our collaboration with the University of Huddersfield – who support the 'Made in Huddersfield' initiative; 75% of all products we specified for their new media centre were sourced from within a 40 mile radius of the site.

Environmentally Preferable Products

Wherever possible, AHR specifies EPP-rated products. We identify these in our specifications database, so our designers can identify them early and incorporate them into the design in a timely manner. EPP products have a demonstrable chain of custody that shows they've been manufactured in the least environmentally damaging way possible. They also have the least impact on the user in terms of toxic residues etc.

Recycling

Many manufacturers now offer recycling of waste – derived from both the construction site and from any later building or demolition work that occurs during the lifespan of the building. We identify these manufacturers in our specifications database and as this service grows we will broaden our list. Ensuring that recycling is carried through during the building works is also managed through our specifications – with waste storage and disposal methodologies described within each relevant product specification.

Safe disposal

Sometimes it's just not possible to recycle a product or material. We limit the opportunities for this to occur through our initial selection of materials – but where it does occur then the required disposal methodologies are sent out in the product specification clause.