



Ideal homes

Bill Dunster architects
ZEDfactory Ltd is a leading
light in low carbon living.
The company's designs for zero
carbon building projects are
sought out by clients around
the world.

ZEDfactory began as Bill Dunster Architects in 1998. From day one, the company has been exclusively committed to low carbon building and development. Using tried and tested technologies, ZEDfactory creates designs that are stimulating and practical on a daily basis, yet distinctive, economic and reliable in the long term.

Today, ZEDfactory is a leader in the field of zero-carbon design and development, with a unique track record of delivering Zero (fossil) Energy Development (ZED) buildings in the UK. With 11 architects and a team of visualisation designers, the company offers the full range of architectural services, from masterplanning and design of large-scale 'eco villages' to one-off individual building commissions.

"Even back in the mid 1970s, it was clear that things had to change," says Bill Dunster, founder of ZEDfactory. "Oil and gas reserves were running low, fuel prices were going up every year and the population was growing. I felt that there was no time to wait, so since the early 1980s I have been designing super energy efficient, low carbon, solar housing. We need to get the basics right, and as buildings, whether used as homes or places of work, have a powerful influence on the quality of life of individuals and communities, they have a huge role to play."





Sustainable living

One of ZEDfactory's biggest UK projects is the Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED), an environmentally-friendly housing development near Wallington, England. A joint project with BioRegional, the Peabody Trust and Arup, BedZED is designed to use only energy from renewable sources generated on site, including 111 m² of solar panels. The houses face south to take advantage of solar gain, are triple glazed, and have high thermal insulation.

The project offers a mix of residential and office space, with the apartments finished to a high standard to attract the urban professional.

"BedZED is a microcosm of how the world could be run, with a little imagination and creativity," says Bill Dunster. "It is energy efficient and water efficient, with most rain water falling on the site being collected and reused. The building materials used were selected from renewable or recycled sources within 35 miles of the site, to minimise the energy required for transportation. Because of its location, people coming into the complex to work are going against the flow of usual commuter traffic. Electricity is provided in parking spaces for charging electric cars, and residents are encouraged to use the on-site car pool booked on the internet."





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Exemplar for change

ZEDfactory's experience and vision is generating interest around the world. The company has been invited to take the BedZED concept to the Shanghai Expo 2010, as the London example of Urban Best Practice, beating off competition from over 100 entries. The theme of the exposition will be "Better City – Better Life", promoting Shanghai as a major economic and cultural centre. ZEDfactory is to design and supervise the construction of two permanent mixed-use zero carbon urban blocks.

Like BedZED and ZEDfactory's subsequent projects, the zero carbon blocks will use a combination of state of the art energy efficiency and building integrated renewable energy technologies, without resorting to offsetting or remote generation. The pavilion will remain after the Expo, as a permanent legacy informing future zero carbon development in Shanghai.

"The Expo in Shanghai is an extraordinary opportunity for us to promote the viability and beauty of zero carbon urbanism to the world," says Bill Dunster. "Our two plots will provide around 2,400 square meters spaces of exhibition space for the six month duration of the EXPO, which is expected to attract up to seven million visitors. Our aim is to use the BedZED principles, and a further 10 years experience of zero carbon design, to demonstrate in Shanghai that a step change reduction in carbon footprint can be achieved at the same time as achieving an increase in overall quality of life for most ordinary citizens."

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