

RETROFIT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS IS BEST ROUTE TO SUPPORT PATH TO NET ZERO - SAYS PRIVA

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'The greenest building is the one that is already built' is the key message in a new report from the Government's Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission and supported by building controls manufacturer Priva.

Priva believes that the report (published January 2020) - which is largely focused on domestic buildings - offers much in the way of sensible thinking for both commercial buildings and those owned and operated by the public sector.

Currently, in many cases it is cheaper - for tax reasons - to knock a building down and rebuild it rather than retrofit it, even though the former may be more environmentally intensive. The report says 'the greenest building is the one that is already built' - and highlights that as the built environment sector is currently responsible for up to 40% of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions, more needs to be done to encourage greener practices.

The report states: "It is desirable to make better use of existing buildings in city centres given not only the colossal challenges facing traditional urban-based business but critically the need to better use finite natural resources. We want to dispel the perception that renovation represents poor value for money in comparison with demolition and reconstruction."

Power of retrofit

Priva says it's essential that there is a major shift in thinking and policy towards the re-use, refurbishment and retrofit of existing building stock:

Gavin Holvey, UK & Ireland Sales Manager comments :

"We can make so much more of the buildings we already have. With the addition - or upgrade of - building control systems and other energy efficiency measures, we can help to bring older buildings in-line with the performance of modern structures. Building from scratch is carbon intensive - we must therefore think smarter about approaches to the re-use and greening of our building stock."

Priva's suite of control technologies makes it possible to upgrade existing buildings with legacy BMS systems by reusing existing cabling and sensors/field devices. This can be achieved with ease. Previously, in older buildings, burdened with outdated controls technology that it was uneconomical to fully replace, owners and occupiers had no choice but to 'make do'. However, the ability to retrofit old systems with new controls makes a positive contribution to sustainability - such as energy outcomes and operational efficiencies.

"All in all, the retrofit approach offers a commercial 'win-win' for UK plc. I believe it gives it a much more sustainable approach to managing the long-term impact of the built environment."



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