

At alma-nac, we've always believed architecture has the power to do more than solve spatial problems—it can actively contribute to a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable world. Becoming a certified B Corp in 2024 was a milestone for us. It formalised a commitment that has long been at the heart of our practice: to design with purpose, empathy and impact.

This first Impact Report captures a year in which we've built on those values in meaningful ways. From pioneering whole-life net zero buildings and integrating Passive House principles into our housing work, to championing behaviour change in schools through our involvement with the Department for Education's Net Zero Accelerator, we've sought to embed sustainability and social value into everything we do.

A standout initiative has been Design for All—our pro bono programme supporting small charities and community organisations to get vital building projects off the ground. From community housing to inclusive outdoor centres we've helped shape environments that directly support wellbeing and belonging. This work speaks to our belief that good design should be accessible to all, not just those with deep pockets or loud voices.

Internally, we've continued to nurture an inclusive, collaborative studio culture, where wellbeing, creativity and continuous learning are central. And we've been deliberate in reflecting on how we can keep improvingthrough better feedback loops with clients, cross-team knowledge sharing, and more responsive governance.

Being a B Corp has given us both a framework and a community. It keeps us accountable while inspiring us to push further. We're proud of what we've achieved so far—and even more excited for what's next.

Thank you for reading, and for being part of this journey.

**Chris Bryant** 











# About alma-nac

alma-nac is a London-based architecture studio established in 2010 by Chris Bryant, Caspar Rodgers and Tristan Wigfall.

The practice has built a reputation for its imaginative yet pragmatic work. Named as one of AJ's 40 under 40, we have won the AJ retrofit award twice as well as Regional and National RIBA awards.

Much of our work focuses on the reuse and reimagining of existing spaces to provide more sustainable design solutions. Having won the AJ Retrofit Housing award for Paxton House, we have just completed a Whole Life Net Carbon Zero project for Dulwich College, a LETI Pioneer project.

Central to alma-nac's work is a participatory approach; exploring the positive impact of meaningful engagement with clients and end users.

In 2023, in collaboration with other built environment professionals, we launched Design for All, a support programme for small charities and community groups to get their building projects off the ground.



#### Mission statement

At alma-nac, we are committed to creating innovative and sustainable designs that positively impact the environment and the communities we work in. We specialise in low carbon buildings and imaginative retrofit, using our expertise to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions.

We approach every project with a sense of playfulness and joy, seeking out opportunities to collaborate and participate with our clients and stakeholders. Through participatory design and an inclusive, nurturing environment, we continuously learn and grow to deliver exceptional solutions that delight and inspire.



#### **Practice Values**

Our five core values are integral to the way we practice as architects and the designs we produce.

### 1 Participation

Architecture is a social act.

Participatory design is key to our work; we learn, educate, share and collaborate all the way through.

#### 2 Nurturing

No one has all the answers.

We create an inclusive and nurturing environment which supports continuous learning.

#### 3 Joyful

Our projects are playful.

We hold our projects lightly, seeking out joy to deliver projects that delight.

## 4 Innovating

We always ask 'What if?'.

We explore, test and question to create innovative solutions.

#### 5 Conscious

Sustainability is a non-negotiable.

We are committed to positively enhancing the context, community and environment in which we work.



# Journey to certification

We are delighted to be publishing our first impact report since certifying in May 2024.

In 2023 we decided to start the application process to become a B Corp. We knew we were doing good things - we had already run one season of Design for all, the pro bono design scheme that we run with our partners. We were increasing our experience in sustainable design; working on a major net zero school project and had a long history of working on retrofits. For us, it made sense to work towards being a B Corp - it aligned with our culture and our values.

The process was not easy. As a small team of 10 it was a big investment of our time. Sometimes the process seemed a little US-oriented, so required some navigation. Now that the new B Corp standards have been issued we look forward to getting a better understanding of them and seeing how the new certification process differs.

A year ago when we certified we were incredibly proud to join the B Corp community and since then there are many new things to be proud of. Being a B Corp has rubber stamped the strategic direction we want to take.

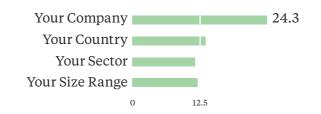
The period this Impact Report covers is from May 2024 to April 2025; our first year of being B Corp certified.

# Overall B Impact Score





# Environment



As architects, we have an exponentially greater impact on the environment through the projects we design and construct compared to our studio's internal carbon footprint. Ensuring sustainable choices are made in every project is the largest impact we can have.

This past year we have made real in-roads, both in terms of the development of our in-house knowledge and in its application.

The year started with a member of the team qualifying as a Passive House Designer. This knowledge has been disseminated amongst the team with Passive House principles being woven into our design process. Following this on two separate residential schemes, we helped the client see the value in designing them to reach Passive House standards. These 2 schemes are on course to deliver 23 new homes.

Dulwich College Lower School Library has now been completed. Registered as a LETI Pioneer project, the building achieves Whole-life Net Zero Carbon by meeting LETI energy use intensity targets for educational buildings. A fabric-first design approach, 100% electric building systems and careful material selection underpin its performance.

There are still improvements to be made. For instance, ensuring sustainability reviews of projects are carried out at every stage will be key.

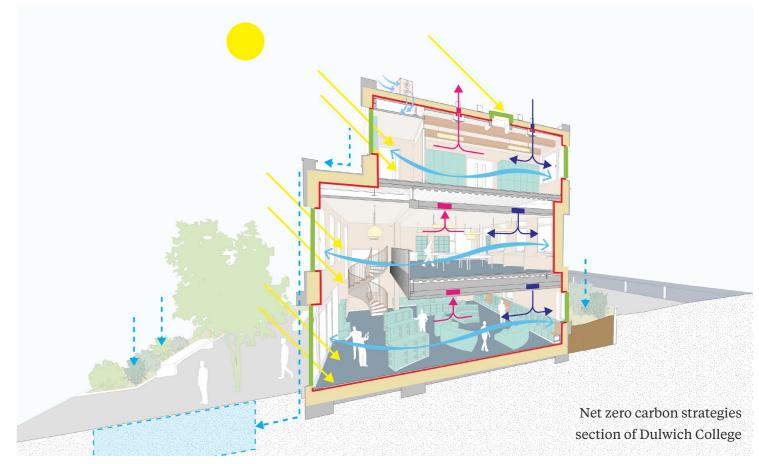
#### Some stats:

- 1 Passive House Designer
- 2 Residential Passive House schemes
- 2 Sustainability champions
- 42 hours of CPD learning on sustainability
- 2 Study tours
- 4 Sustainability conferences attended





Wheel showing our 10
Sustainability Commitments
summarising the practice's
approach to sustainable
design. They are derived
from the UN Sustainable
Development Goals and
cover the RIBA Sustainable
Outcomes.



# Case Study DfE Net Zero Accelerator

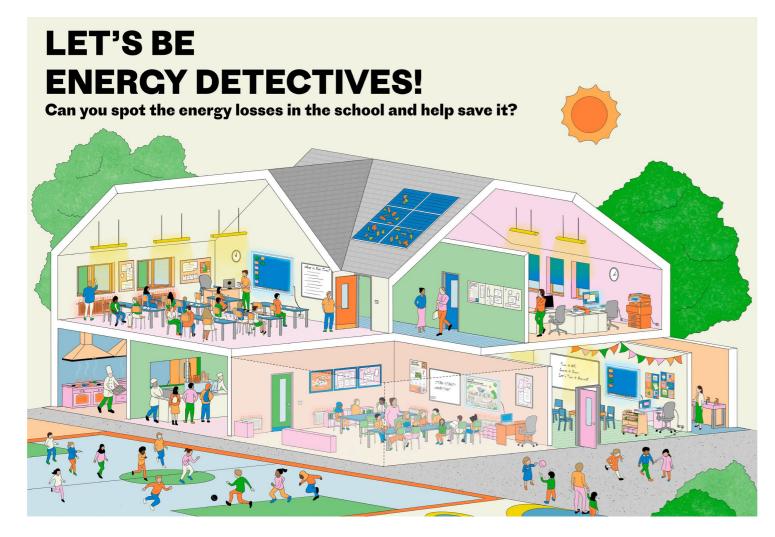
NET ZERO
NEEDS
EVERYDAY
HEROES
by alma-nac

The UK's education estate represents 37% of total UK public sector building emissions. As part of the UK Government's commitment to achieve net zero by 2050, schools will need to play their part in decarbonisation. LocatED, an arms-length company of the Department for Education initiated the Net Zero Accelerator Pathfinder (NZAP), a study aimed to facilitate the rapid rollout of decarbonisation across the education estate.

alma-nac were appointed as part of a consortium led by Ameresco leading on our how behaviour changes can lower energy use. Working with 25 schools, we ran high energy, motivating and impactful behaviour change workshop days. This involved all levels within the school, students, teachers, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and estates management in order to create future resilience and sustain behaviour changes. Students used specialist equipment to become energy loss detectives in their school and form an action plan of simple changes to habits which could save energy. The day also included meeting with building managers to understand the current operation of buildings and linking key teachers and SLT into the discussions through forming a Climate Action Board in each school.

100% of teachers thought our interactive workshops were highly engaging and pitched at the right level.

Post workshops we have continued to support schools in reducing their energy use through behaviour changes and have seen up to a 30% reduction in some schools.





# Governance



A crucial part of applying to become a B Corp, was amending our articles of association to commit the company to ensuring that through its business and operations that it has a material positive impact on society and the environment as a whole, as well as to its members.

To this end, directors meet weekly, setting the strategic practice direction and while doing so, ensure it is in alignment with its commitment to people, planet and profit.

In line with this, we have recently changed our bank to a more ethical choice; one that has takes social and environmental responsibilities seriously.

In other governance matters, all team members continue to play a part in general practice management. Our 2 newest team members have taken on the management of our instagram account. Another member of staff has taken on the role of CPD coordination in addition to the management of 'fikas' where we have informal learning / discussion sessions.

Our 2 sustainability champions continue their sterling work developing our learning and processes to ensure we can maximise the sustainability of our projects.

Our business development lead works on developing the project pipeline.

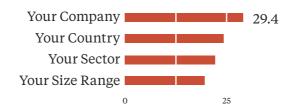
All members of our team now lead a strand that contributes to the running of the practice. Ensuring everyone has a voice in shaping our direction.

Other developments include our director, Caspar Rodgers joining the Barnet Design Review Panel.

Each quarter, we hold a Quarterly Review to summarise and celebrate the events of the previous quarter, updating each other on projects, practice matters and personal highlights.



# Workers



At alma-nac, we are deeply committed to our team's wellbeing and professional growth. We believe in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and fostering a supportive, collaborative environment. As such, we lean away from the industry norm of overtime.

We value open communication and actively seek our team's input on the direction of the practice. Everyone's voice matters, and we aim to make working at alma/nac a positive and fulfilling experience.

This year, we were delighted to welcome two new Part I architectural assistants to the team, bringing us to a total of ten.

All team members are paid above the London Living Wage, reflecting our commitment to fair pay and respect for the work our staff do.

We continue to engage with the wider profession through our involvement with the London Practice Forum and the Arch HR Network, where we both contribute to and learn from best practice. Some highlights of the year:

#### Christmas immersive experience

Heading to Punchdrunk's production of 'Viola's Room' in Woolwich.

#### Thursday lunches

Weekly communal lunch provided by alma-nac continued. Pasta Evangelists proved popular.

#### Bake off

Oli became Bake off champ after sneaking vegetables into cake under the theme of 'Surprise'.

#### **Traitors**

Caspar Winkleman recreated the BBC show far away from Scotland in a Lambeth studio. Shifty looks ensued. No one could be trusted.

#### 'Play!' creativity workshops

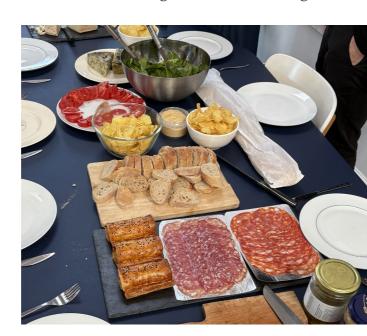
Our practice manager kicked off 'Play' a series of workshops to get the creative juices flowing.

#### Isle of Dogs walking tour

Our Summer Social had us taking a perambulation around the Isle of Dogs.

#### fika

Following the Swedish tradition of connecting over a coffee break, the fika is a chance to discuss a topic of any persons choosing. Many fika's were held covering AI visualisation through to zero waste sewing.









# Case study -Play!

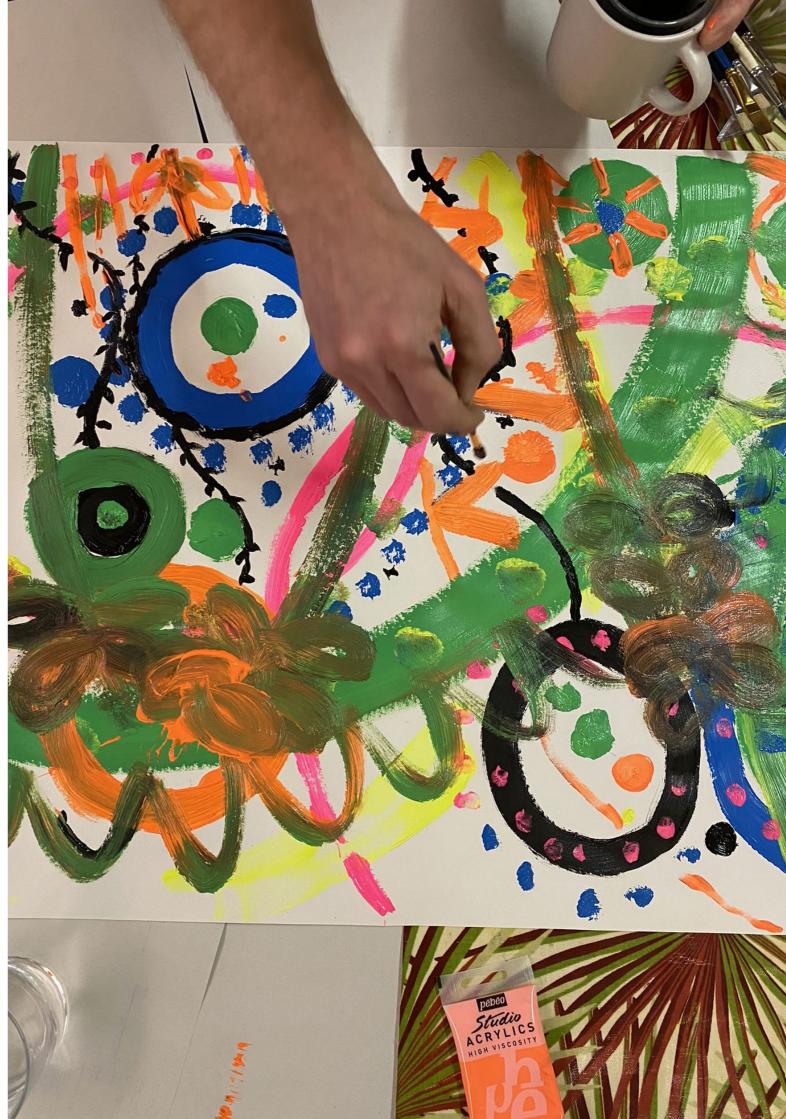
In 2024, our practice manager initiated 'Play!'

'Play' serves as an opportunity for the team to take part in low-stakes creativity and bring out their inner child.

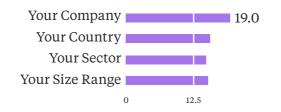
So far, 4 sessions have taken place, each time focusing on a different activity including collaborative painting, life drawing, paper weaving and printing with Lego.

It's hoped that over time, team members will use this opportunity to share their artistic skills with their peers and have some fun while they are at it.





# Community



Participatory design has always been a key part of the alma-nac process and with our project for L8 Matters Community Land Trust (CLT) we've been able to utilise it to the fullest. This year we carried out our 2nd consultation with L8 Matters CLT in Liverpool who were the inaugural recipients of the Design for all programme in 2023.

L8 Matter is the first black-led CLT and have ambitions to build a sustainable community on the site of former public swimming baths, with affordable housing alongside a mix of community and commercial spaces. The project is targeting Passive House certification.

We have held three in-depth sessions with L8 Matters to develop the brief and initial designs. We began by developing the brief and ambition of the project by talking about memories of the area and what the community hope the future would hold. Following sessions looked in more detail at housing layouts and the design of the communal garden through model making and precedents. The result is an highly ambitious proposal to create exactly the housing this community needs.

In other community news, in September we returned to Tooting Works to lead a tour for Open City weekend. Tooting Works is a hub for individuals and startups as well as being a community asset and was completed in 2023.





# Community Outreach for Future Architects

This year we made efforts to get the next generation into the architecture profession.

We have long wanted to build a relationship with a local school and this year we made that connection with the London Nautical School right around the corner. We took some of our finest models and leaflets and manned a stand at their careers fair in March. We spoke with pupils from year 7 all the way through to year 13. Hopefully we inspired some children to consider a career in architecture. Perhaps we will see some of them for a future work experience placement.

Shortly after that, we had the pleasure of hosting an event with Open Studio. Part 1 and 2 students were invited to come in and listen to us present a whistle-stop tour of alma-nac projects, learn about the key skills in practice, as well as portfolio 'do's and don'ts'. Students then got an opportunity to show their portfolio to members of the team to get a steer on how they could be improved. We were delighted to get excellent feedback following the event.

In addition, each year our team members are each given 2 days to assist with crits in architectural schools. This year our team attended crits at the LSA, AA, Westminster and Sheffield University.





# DESIGN FOR ALL

Design for All has been set up to provide small charities and community organisations with professional expertise to get their building projects off the ground.

The support programme provides expert advice for building related projects which are in early development. This is often the hardest part of the project to find funding for.

alma-nac formed a team of built environment professionals including: structural engineers (Simple Works), planning consultants (NTA Planning), quantity surveyors, project managers (both Stockdale) and sustainability consultants (Beyond Carbon) with OR Consulting joining this years team taking care of building services, and environmental design, acoustics, lighting, energy and facilities management.

We believe in the power of good design and that great spaces can facilitate great communities. We see this in our projects and many other great spaces across the UK. We have often provided pro-bono work for organisations that don't have the resources or need some initial help to access funding. However, this frequently comes through our contacts and we wanted to make this more equitable and available to everyone.



The Woodcraft Folk had considered demolishing Biblins Bunkhouse, a derelict timber building overlooking the River Wye. However, the Design For All team's study demonstrated how the structure could be re purposed and expanded upon. The resulting new centre would provide accommodation for younger children including those with additional needs and includes a multipurpose hall.



The Royal Cornwall Hospitals Charity wish to repurpose an existing office building to create a Family Accommodation Centre. This Centre will provide a peaceful space for relatives of patients in critical care to stay close to the hospital during difficult times. It will include therapy rooms and a communal garden.

The Design For All team provided a feasibility study to help the Charity better understand the potential for the existing building.



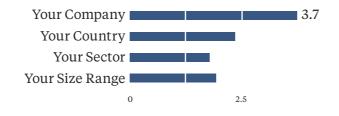
The E16 Community Land Trust had the opportunity to renovate a corner building in a state of severe disrepair into a vibrant community hub. The low-cost adaptation would provide a community kitchen and café, a crèche, a co-working space and a flexible events area.

Design For All provided a feasibility report to assist with further funding bids.

The Design for All team provided professional expertise to help us on our journey to developing our dream building - a sustainable haven to inspire future generations. The detail and quality of their work exceeded our expectations, giving us the data and evidence needed to make progress.

Debs McCahon, CEO Woodcraft Folk

# Customers



At the heart of our architectural practice is a commitment to continuous improvement through open and inclusive feedback.

In January we ran a client service roundtable to identify where we can improve. Topics included: communication, construction budget, fees, feedback, brief and design expectations.

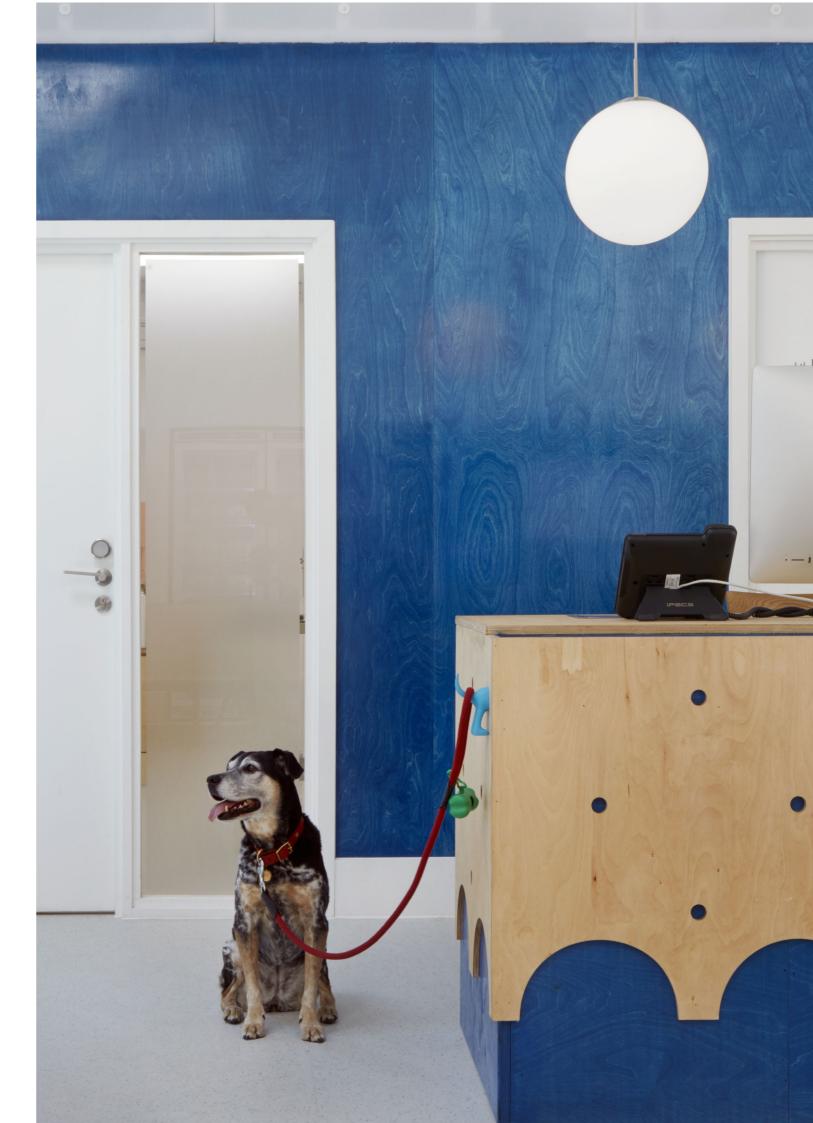
Through these discussions, recommendations were made, feeding into training, procedures around communications, document simplifications and how we handle our telecommunications.

We have recognised ihat we need to more consistently issue our client feedback questionnaire at the end of RIBA stages. By embedding these feedback loops into our each stage, we can ensure that each project evolves in response to real needs and experiences.

This approach will lead to better design outcomes but also will fosters trust, transparency, and long-term impact.

'I wanted to pass on my heartfelt thanks to you all and to all of the Design For All team, for the incredible work you have put into our project. Your combined efforts have been invaluable in ensuring we have all the information we need to move forward to the next stage of our accommodation project.'

Richard Kramer, Chair of Royal Cornwall Hospitals Charitable Funds Committee



# Davidson Prize

Last year we were ecstatic to be named a finalist for the Davidson Prize

The topic was 'Rethinking Home - Adapt and Re-use', asking us to communicate inventive solutions to address housing shortage in the context of climate change.

We formed a team with structural engineer Brian Constant, Gardener/architect Dr Eric Guidbert and Dr Mark Blackwell, an aerospace engineer.

We presented the Robin Hood Co-living Community - a bold and ambitious proposal and one that addresses a real and ever present issue that will only increase: what do we do with redundant airports and planes?

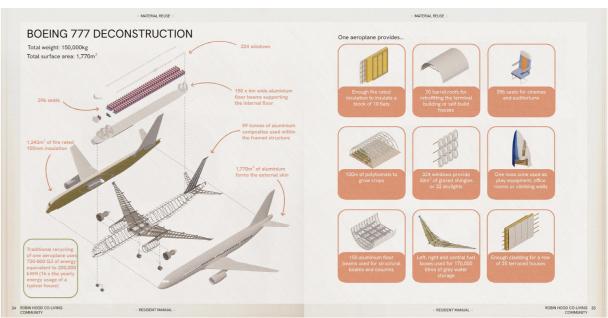
We selected Robin Hood Airport near Doncaster, which closed in 2022 as our case study to show how an airport terminal can be re imagined as a co-living space and seed a larger self-build community across its grounds.

Aeroplanes contain high grade insulation in panels; fuselages which can be reused as bridges, barrel roofs and polytunnels; and composite skins and windows to be used as be shingles.

The ambition was to re-wild large parts of the grounds but also provide area to grow building materials and launch a large scale self-build community.







# alma-nac collaborative architecture