

Ashfold

B Corp
Impact Report 2024



Ashfold's B Corp Impact Report 2024



The Carter (c) Stiff & Trevillion

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As part of Ashfold's B Corp certification, we publish an annual impact report to honour our commitment to transparency and accountability around the social and environmental impact created and planned by our business.

What is a B Corp?

Certified B Corporations® (B Corps™) are for-profit companies that use the power of business to build a more inclusive and sustainable economy. They meet the highest verified standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.

Introduction



Welcome to Ashfold's second annual B Corp impact report. Since we published our first report in April 2023, the world has unfortunately become a harder place to do business. Undoubtedly global conflicts are grabbing headlines, and as a result the level of press

interest in climate change, UN sustainability goals and carbon reduction has waned (somewhat ironically, given the amount of environmental damage caused by modern warfare). The need for achieving net zero carbon and 'sustainable development' has become even more urgent, and we're pleased to see some progress being made.

London's planning and design briefs now recognise issues such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and re-use of existing building structures, and this year the City of London Corporation issued a Planning Advice Note (PAN) on whole lifecycle carbon optioneering. We've observed an increased interest in achieving NABERS in use for existing buildings, and BREEAM, Wiredscore and WELL accreditations are also becoming more popular. We're also pleased to see a number of developers and consultants joined the B Corp movement this year, including General Projects, V7, Platform, Stanhope, Elliot Wood, and Hilson Moran.

With so much outside of our control, Ashfold is making modest incremental improvements to our B Corp objectives, but no radical change this year. Community is - and probably always will be - at the heart of our commitments. Jane and myself, as joint owners of Ashfold, continue our long term support of local charities that mean a lot to us, donating our time, Ashfold profits and fundraising campaigns (thank you to those of you who contributed!) Ruth and Emily, Ashfold's principle freelance employees, have also continued their valuable charity work with our full support. Emily also qualified as a Climate Fresk facilitator earlier this year and she carried out an insightful workshop with the Ashfold team; we've included all these highlights later in the report.

Profit, people, planet: UN sustainable development goals

At the heart of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership. We are actively looking for ways to improve our business and the buildings we develop to achieve goal 9; 'to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation', and goal 11; 'to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.' To date, we have had the opportunity to target one indicator on our retrofit workplace project, The Carter (9.4.1. CO2 emission per unit of value added), but in the year ahead we hope to report further progress in pursuit of these goals.

These goals give us an opportunity to think more carefully about how we can positively impact people and the planet, and not just focus on profit. That said, our principle objective is still to make money precisely in order that we can continue to work towards these goals.

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Our year in review

This year we completed three projects, each one in support of our B Corp objectives:

- At our Duke Road home refurbishment lime plaster was specified throughout; the first time we had seen this in use. This low-carbon, high-insulation product achieves high u-values.
- In Bournemouth, we assisted in developing a sustainable masterplan for Talbot Village that promises a new urban centre with much-needed student accommodation, retail, SEN school and large community space.
- At The Carter commercial workplace retrofit, we commissioned PV cells on the roof, a green roof and green walls across three terraces, and a rainwater attenuation tank. We incorporated a BMS that enables the all-electric building to be metered in over 200 different locations, monitors CO2 levels and incorporates a sophisticated lighting control system.

Ashfold's B Corp score explained

Ashfold became a certified B Corp in April 2022, after six months of scrutinising every aspect of our business under B Corp's five impact areas; governance, team, environment, community and clients.

We're proud that our first verified score of 46% (97.3 out of a possible 210) is well above the average initial assessment score of 27%.

Our B Corp verified score: 46%

Governance 62%

(15.4 out of 25) Governance evaluates a company's overall mission, engagement around its social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency.

Team 49%

(22.4 out of 50) Team (or 'workers' in B Corp terminology), evaluates a company's contributions to its employees' financial security, health & safety, wellness, career development, and engagement & satisfaction.

Community 60%

(30 out of 50) Community evaluates a company's engagement with and impact on the communities in which it operates, hires from, and sources from. Topics include diversity, equity & inclusion, economic impact, civic engagement, charitable giving, and supply chain management.

Environment 33%

(26.2 out of 80) Environment evaluates a company's overall environmental management practices as well as its impact on the air, climate, water, land, and biodiversity. This includes the direct impact of a company's operations and, when applicable its supply chain and distribution channels.

Clients 64%

(3.2 out of 5) Clients (or 'customers' in B Corp terminology), evaluates a company's stewardship of its customers through the quality of its services, ethical marketing, data privacy and security, and feedback channels.

Our annual highlights



When we recertify in March 2025, we aim for an improved B Corp score of 100 or above.

Our plans for improvement won't all score points and there is a lot outside of our control. Some of the plans we outlined in our [first report](#) are small steps in the right direction, some simply streamline our business processes.

However, our overarching purpose is to keep doing better. To tangibly improve our environmental efforts, and to hold ourselves accountable to our clients, our team, our stakeholders, and the communities we live and work within.

Governance highlights

This year our biggest project to date came to an end and our focus has shifted to winning new work. Our most ambitious B Corp governance (and environmental) plans centre on the type of work we win, where it is, and who we work for and with. Of course there is a lot here that is outside of our control and depends on the project opportunities that arise and - crucially - whether we secure them in a competition.

Doing the right thing isn't always easy

PLAN

- We aim to seek out new work from both repeat and new clients who share our priorities, and - if those opportunities don't arise - to do our best to convert unwilling clients.
- Put a schedule in place to develop Martin's B Corp-related speaking opportunities.

PROGRESS

In the last year we actively pursued a potential project with excellent community aspects. Unfortunately we didn't secure it as a larger competitor agreed to take it on pro-bono; something a small business like Ashfold cannot afford to do. We also turned down a significant opportunity because we felt the project type didn't align with our ESG objectives and values.

Last year Martin joined a B Corp built environment group and has taken part in various events, seminars and roundtable discussions, with more in the pipeline.



MCM's B Corp Breakfast Roundtable in March 2024 was an inspiring discussion about finding the right balance between profit and social impact.

Team highlights

As a small business this is one of our lowest scoring areas, but becoming a B Corp has helped us re-evaluate how we communicate our commitments and principles to our team. And to see the value in encouraging and amplifying the diverse experiences, interests and professional development within the Ashfold team.

Sparking conversations

PLAN

- Create regular opportunities within the Ashfold team to share resources on all topics relevant to our ESG responsibilities. We will then share this with our wider audience, through our popular quarterly newsletter and social media channels.
- Create a formal remote working and flexible working policy to reassure our employees and freelance consultants of their rights and our responsibilities.
- Track our carbon use through work-related travel to put carbon offsetting measures in place, and identify improvements we can all make as a team.

PROGRESS

In 2023 our freelance project manager and dedicated advocate for climate education, Emily Churchill delivered an eye-opening Climate Fresk workshop for the Ashfold team. Read Emily's article about the journey [here](#), first published in our winter newsletter.

Martin's article about gender balance in our industry sparked a lot of interesting conversations when it was published in our autumn 2023 newsletter. [Read it here](#) and get in touch to keep this important conversation going.

Ashfold has always encouraged remote and flexible working, so we're dotting the i's and crossing the t's to make this formal and circulate to the team.

According to the [Carbon Trust](#), the average UK SME generates around 15 tonnes CO2 every year. Ashfold has signed up to Normative to track our carbon emissions; our first report shows the business generates 3.33 tonnes CO2 emissions. We're pleased to be well below the average, but there's more we can do.



Emily's Climate Fresk workshop gave everyone in the Ashfold team a new perspective on how we can all tackle the climate emergency.

Environment highlights

Due to the carbon output of our industry, the environment is a priority area for improvement, but - as mentioned under Governance - as a small business the tangible impact we can have depends entirely on the work we secure and the sustainability commitments of our clients and their teams.

Success will take time

PLAN

- Focus on winning retrofit and re-use projects over new build, to put our circular economy experience to good use.
- Encourage the clients and design teams we work with to engage with the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge, and seek BREEAM, SKA, WELL, Passivhaus and/or NABERS UK accreditation for our projects where appropriate.

PROGRESS

This part of our plan is a slow-burner. We're getting into the swing of finding new work, learning more, and seeking out like-minded people.

We're focussing our efforts into expanding and applying our knowledge of retrofit, re-use and the circular economy: We've joined the BCO and Construction Excellence; we remain members of the NLA, and we're attending the upcoming LREF and Footprint conferences.

[Get in touch to meet Martin there.](#)



Project highlight: Our recently completed project, The Carter at 11 Pilgrim Street, is an example of circular economy principles in action. BREEAM rated Excellent, and platinum WiredScore rating.

Community highlights

This is our highest scoring B Corp impact area, thanks to Ashfold's charitable giving, and Martin and Jane's own dedicated volunteer work. Since our last report we have continued to volunteer, fundraise and promote the work of the charities that are important to us, and this work will continue, regardless of the projects Ashfold is working on.

Where our hearts belong

Ashfold is a long-time benefactor of these brilliant organisations, all supporting communities local to Martin and Jane:



Wimbledon BookFest
London's leading literary festival, bringing inclusive, engaging and affordable events to the local community.



Knights Youth Centre
Transforming lives in their community with care, hope, love and faith, since 1936.



Faith in Action
Supporting homeless and vulnerably-housed people in and around the London Borough of Merton.



Polka Children's Theatre
Improving children's lives, bringing communities together, and creating ground-breaking theatre.

Our wonderful Ashfold team dedicate their time and energy to charities that mean a lot to all of us. Thank you to everyone who already supported us - please feel free to make your own donations at the links here:



Ashfold Christmas campaign
Every year Ashfold runs a Christmas fundraiser. This year we supported **TERN** where Emily is an advisor. This non-profit social enterprise supports refugees to start their own business.



Lewisham Donation Hub
Supported by Lindsay and the second charity in our Christmas campaign, this food & goods bank helps people in SE postcodes, Bromley and Croydon. Staffed entirely by volunteers, many who are themselves asylum seekers awaiting their claims to be processed, it's an invaluable local resource.



St John's night shelter
Jane runs a winter night shelter through her local church; caring for guests, providing valuable work experience for local students and, importantly, organising temporary hotel accommodation for everyone who needs it.



Crohn's & Colitis UK
During January this year, Ruth took part in the Big Winter Workout to raise much needed funds to support everyone affected by these life-changing diseases.

Client highlights

This is our lowest scoring area - thanks in a large part to the nature of the service we offer and the industry we work within. We work to stringent externally audited quality standards, ISO 9001 2015, and through this we make incremental improvements every year. Becoming a B Corp has given us a fresh viewpoint and we have plans to improve our feedback and communications.

Lessons learned

PLAN

- Roll out monthly 'lessons learnt' project feedback and reviews, with the view to making continuous improvements for the benefit of our current and future clients.
- Showcase project-specific environmental and social accreditations and initiatives in all Ashfold communication materials, to demonstrate our commitment, and hopefully inspire future clients and colleagues of the difference we can all make.

PROGRESS

We've actively pursued follow-up sessions with our teams to write comprehensive Lessons Learnt reports on all our completing projects.

We have updated our internal quality plans and documents with dedicated ESG targets and values sections. Not only does this make it easier to hold ourselves accountable, but gives our writers the information they need to improve our communications materials. In our latest company profile, each project description now has a dedicated section on the ESG credentials of that project, and all of our materials now reflect Ashfold's values and how these impact our work. (Please [contact Martin](#) to ask for a copy.)

The Carter
An exemplar sustainable workplace retrofit in the City



The Carter reception (c) Stiff + Trevillion

Ashfold's role:	Project manager Employer's agent
Client:	Credit Suisse
Location:	Blackfriars, London
Dates:	2020 - 2023
Size:	117,000 ft ² (NIA)
Project team	
Development manager:	Simten
Architect:	Stiff + Trevillion
Engineer:	Webb Yates
Services:	Atelier 10
Quantity surveyor:	Exigere
Accreditations:	BREEAM Excellent Wiredscore Premium

The renovation of this commercial office building has been driven by a client determined to achieve transformational carbon savings in a poorly performing building. Situated in Blackfriars, the existing 20 year old office building underwent a major renovation to deliver 117,000 ft² (NIA) premium quality Cat A open plan workspace over nine floors. The concrete frame was retained, building core reconfigured, ground floor and deep basement rationalised, an atrium infilled to create a new full floor, and new MEP installed. A new seventh floor hybrid timber-framed extension creates an additional level of workspace and rooftop terrace with impressive views to St Paul's.

The retrofit project incorporates outstanding circular economy and sustainable practices. These include the reuse of floor tiles and retention of substantial amounts of the original building, in total saving 98.8% waste from going to landfill. The new extension is a sustainable timber framed construction. A new all-electric HVAC system, including photovoltaics and solar thermal panels, will reduce operational carbon emissions by 55.6% compared with the existing building.


With employee wellbeing at the heart of the design, cycling to work is encouraged with a 227-space bike park, end of journey facilities, a dedicated cycle lift and maintenance area, plus charging points for electric bikes. Every floor has excellent air quality and daylight and access to green outdoor space.

Reusing the existing building structure saved 61% embodied carbon
(compared to a complete rebuild)

How we contributed to the success of The Carter
Ashfold was retained at RIBA Stage 2 as a trusted advisor to the project development manager, and then from Stage 3 onwards we took on project manager and employer's agent duties for day-to-day delivery of the project. The project was commissioned and the bulk of work carried out during the COVID 19 pandemic. We overcame every practical and wellbeing challenge this presented, helping to establish new ways of working, communicating and team bonding.

We worked closely with the project team to deliver the client's ambitious sustainability and wellbeing targets. Ashfold was also proud to contribute to the social value of the project, taking part in volunteer days and community events alongside the project team and client.

We are keen to continue to champion our client's vision and team's expertise. In spring 2023 we organised a site visit with Webb Yates to promote the merits and practicalities of timber in commercial development construction, with more site visits planned (please contact [Martin Long](#) for more information).

ASHFOLD 

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