

Lack of space in a property is a real and serious problem. If children do not have the space to do their homework, they can underachieve at school, impacting negatively on their chances for the future.

Physical and mental illness can also be linked with poor housing conditions, and, according to a study carried out by Shelter, children growing up in unsatisfactory housing are 25% more likely to suffer ill health during childhood and early adulthood.

Lost in space

The Decent Homes Standard was created to ensure all public sector housing is warm, weatherproof, with reasonably modern facilities. But the issue of space is a slightly trickier one. Measures can be taken to ensure the existing space is used to its full potential, but an extra room cannot be created out of thin air.

Social housing estates in areas of Scandinavia and Northern Europe, however, have been using a modular building system to do just that — and this system is now available in the UK market.

The Balco Glazing system is designed to turn small open balconies on high rise flats and HMOs into extended glazed areas that can be utilized year round — effectively creating an extra room.

Incorporating a balcony system into external refurbishment works can run into its own problems, for example, if the façade has been subjected to carbonisation, which can be triggered by

Storey time

When it comes to creating extra living space in existing buildings, things are looking up. Keely Portway explains.

excessive rain — a problem the UK is only too aware of — and causes discolouration and streaking. Making good the concrete prior to refurbishment can be costly, and with the weather remaining unpredictable, is a process that will often need repeating.

Balco's balcony system combines individual units to create a 'climate wall', which provides a weather-resistant layer to the outer skin that will protect it for at least 35 years, negating the need for further costly refurbishment work. The glazed system also protects against heat loss from the building, providing an extra 3°, which enables tenants to turn down their thermostat, in turn, reducing CO₂ emissions.

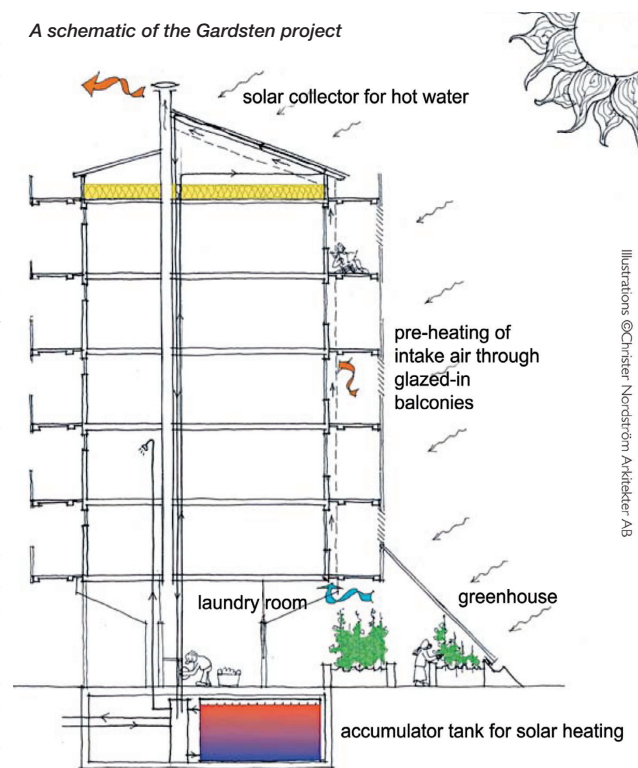
Drain gain

Two drainage systems are available, to ensure there will be no ugly drip marks from rain or dirty water. Both lead water along concealed channels, directly down to the ground. Base Line is a standard solution — water is led from the rail profile out over the parapet section to fall away from the front of the balcony. The built-in ventilation reduces any risk of condensation on the glass and safeguards

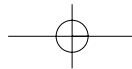
the building's existing ventilation system.

Clean Line eliminates dirty marks from dripping water by capturing it all in the lower edge of the balcony section and directing down to the ground via channels integrated into the aluminium frame. Water running down the glass is not permitted to dirty the cladding — not even water from window cleaning. An integrated lower channel acts as a reserve drain — in cases of tenants forgetting to close the window — leading rainwater away from the floor.

A schematic of the Gardsten project



Illustrations ©Christer Nordström Arkitekt AB



Housing Refurbishment Inc CIH Preview



Case Study

The district of Gardsten in North-east Gothenburg was once one of Sweden's most problem filled suburbs. First built in 1965, the buildings were part of the country's 'Million Programme' designed to address the housing shortage by providing a million new homes across the country.

This target was achieved but, over the course of time, the apartments fell into neglect and a state of disrepair.

In 1997, regeneration work started on the buildings. The Balco system was used to create a more modern appearance for the refurbished blocks, which now look new despite their 40-year lifespan.

One of the biggest benefits to residents is the increase in living space — the system was used to transform open outdoor balcony spaces into what can only be described as conservatories in the sky. And, in 2006, the estate won the *Enhancement of the Social Structure Award* for transforming such a problem area into one that is now very desirable.

It is hoped that local authorities will follow this example — and be as successful — when refurbishing their stock.

■ With thanks to Lee Rosser at Balco for his help in preparing this article

More Information

For further information about Balco's glazed balcony systems visit www.readerlink.co.uk or mark

READERLINK 157

Supplying all your roofline & building product needs



• Roofline • Rainwater • Drainage • Conservatories • Windows, Doors & Panels • Cladding • Canopies, Shutters & Surrounds • Ventilation • Insulated Glass Components • Solar Panels •

SIG Roofline & Building Plastics, a division of the international company SIG plc, is the UK's market-leading specialist supplier of: **roofline, rainwater, drainage, cladding, insulation, ventilation, windows, doors and conservatories etc.**

- Over 128 branches throughout the UK
- Staffed by motivated, experienced personnel
- Estimating and site take-off service
- Reliable service and support including technical advice, samples, fitting advice, legal compliance etc.

SIG Roofline & Building Plastics,
 Unit 3, Clare Hall, Parsons Green,
 St. Ives Business Park, St. Ives,
 Cambs. PE27 4WY
 Tel: 0845 6586656



www.sigroofline.co.uk email: info@sigroofline.co.uk

READERLINK 076

