HOARE LEA
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

BREEAM Refurbishment (RF) & Fit Out (FT) Commercial V7. Driving better performance.

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP
NOVEMBER 2026





Foundry Wandsworth, London
We supported the project from Stages 2–6, helping deliver FOUNDRY's largest and most ambitious co-working space to date: 14,000 ft² with more than 240 workstations, collaborative and focus spaces, a central courtyard, coffee bar and external areas. Designed around community, flexibility and a new approach to work and play, the project achieved BREEAM Excellent with a score of 72.9% and was a 2025 SBID Workplace Fit Out Project of the Year finalist.

Photo: Rebecca Faith



Northgate House, Milton Keynes
The extensive refurbishment of Northgate House transformed the existing building into modern office space. The project included upgraded M&E systems, improved glazing, biophilic design features, landscaped roof terraces and enhanced facilities for sustainable travel. Designed to support occupant wellbeing and environmental performance, the project achieved BREEAM Excellent with a score of 73% under BREEAM UK Refurbishment and Fit Out 2014.

Photo: Colliers

BREEAM RF & FT V7.
Our overview of the changes.

At a glance.

Two distinct schemes, better matched to project scope: BREEAM RF & FT V7 separates refurbishment and fit-out into BREEAM RF V7 for wider building upgrades and BREEAM FT V7 for tenant-led and interior-focused works. BREEAM FT V7 therefore provides a more proportionate route for projects where the structure, envelope and core systems are largely unchanged.

Stronger focus on operational and embodied carbon: V7 significantly expands energy and carbon assessments, introducing greater emphasis on predicting operational performance alongside more comprehensive life-cycle assessment and reporting.

Resilience becomes a major consideration: BREEAM RF V7 introduces a dedicated Resilience category covering climate and natural-hazard risk, adaptation and resilience measures. It also carries one of the highest category weightings. Resilience is outside the scope of BREEAM FT V7.

More demanding minimum standards: Mandatory requirements become progressively more stringent at higher ratings, including energy and carbon performance, whole-life carbon assessment, construction resource planning and refrigerant performance.

Greater scope-based filtering: Credits and requirements are increasingly tied to the scope of works included within the project. This is important for BREEAM FT V7, where requirements can be filtered where elements are not being altered.

Simpler assessment of mixed-use buildings: V7 removes the previous requirement for multiple assessments where a single building contains up to five asset types, making assessment of mixed-use assets more straightforward.

UK and International approaches brought together: The previous UK and International approaches are combined within the V7 framework, improving consistency and global comparability while retaining recognition of local regulations and market conditions.

BREEAM Refurbishment V7.
Covers building upgrades that may include changes to the fabric, structure, core building systems and operational performance of an existing asset. It is typically used where work extends beyond individual spaces to improve the overall building's performance and longevity.

BREEAM Fit Out V7.
Is designed for tenant-led or interior-focused projects where the wider building structure and core systems are not being significantly altered. It focuses on interior spaces within a building, including layouts, finishes, furnishings and localised services.

Cited from the BRE Introduction to Fit Out V7 (PN747) document

What's new in BREEAM V7?

BREEAM Refurbishment (RF) & Fit Out (FT) V7 represents a substantive restructuring of BREEAM RFO 2014, rather than simply an update to the existing credit structure. BRE has aligned the new standards more closely with the wider BREEAM V7 framework and, wherever appropriate, with BREEAM New Construction V7, whilst adapting the requirements to the challenges and opportunities of existing buildings. The result is a stronger focus on decarbonisation, predicted operational performance, whole-life and embodied carbon, occupant health and wellbeing and long-term asset performance, alongside a new emphasis on climate resilience within BREEAM RF V7.

The former single RFO 2014 scheme has also been restructured into two distinct standards: BREEAM RF V7, for refurbishment, shell fit-out and wider building upgrades that may involve the fabric, structure, core building systems or operational performance; and BREEAM FT V7, for tenant-led or interior-focused projects where the wider building structure and core systems are not being significantly altered. This provides a more relevant and proportionate assessment route for each project type, while improving consistency and comparability across the wider BREEAM V7 suite.

BREEAM RF & FT V7 also brings the former UK and International approaches into a common framework and increases alignment with external reporting requirements, including the EU Taxonomy.
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Find out more about Hoare Lea's experienced assessors and BREEAM APs on page 6.

BREEAM RF & FT V7.
Key changes by theme.



Energy and carbon.

Greater focus on predicted operational energy and carbon performance, efficient systems and flexible demand, with no fossil fuel use by in-scope services and equipment required to achieve Outstanding.



Materials and circularity.

Expands life-cycle and embodied-carbon assessments across project stages, with greater emphasis on material efficiency, responsible sourcing and design for disassembly and adaptability.



Health & wellbeing

Strengthens natural and electric light requirements, including a new focus on the non-visual effects of light and healthy circadian rhythms, alongside enhanced indoor air quality and occupant comfort.



Management.

Aligns project planning more closely with Soft Landings and strengthens commissioning, handover and aftercare, including the promotion of Zero Carbon Transition Plans. V7 also supports wider alignment with EU Taxonomy reporting.



Water.

Aligns water-efficiency assessment more closely with the wider V7 framework and project scope, rewarding efficient fittings and systems; BREEAM RF V7 also introduces predicted operational water consumption.



Resilience. (BREEAM RF V7 only)

Introduces a new standalone category, shifting from individual risk issues towards structured climate and natural-hazard screening, resilience planning and adaptation. Resilience is outside BREEAM FT V7 scope.

BREEAM V7.
Minimum standards.

One of the most significant changes in RF & FT V7 is the expansion of minimum standards across a wider range of sustainability topics. Under BREEAM 2014, minimum requirements were concentrated primarily around selected management, energy, water and waste issues.

Across the new RF & FT schemes, V7 introduces minimum standards covering a broader range of topics, including responsible construction, commissioning and aftercare, indoor air quality, operational energy, embodied carbon, responsible sourcing, resource efficiency and refrigerant impacts. Requirements are also introduced at lower rating levels, including Pass and Very Good, strengthening the baseline level of performance expected from projects.

Greater focus on performance outcomes

RF & FT V7 also places greater emphasis on defined performance outcomes, rather than relying solely on the achievement of a specified number of credits.

Depending on the assessment scope and applicable scheme requirements, these include:

- Defined energy performance improvement thresholds at Excellent and Outstanding
- Minimum water performance improvements against the project baseline
- Enhanced requirements for energy monitoring and operational energy performance
- Life cycle assessment and embodied carbon reporting
- Restrictions on fossil fuel use at the highest rating level
- Defined requirements relating to refrigerant use and associated emissions

What this means for projects.

For projects targeting Excellent or Outstanding, the V7 minimum standards establish a clearer baseline for performance across operational energy, embodied carbon, commissioning, resource efficiency and wider environmental impacts.

These requirements increase the importance of considering BREEAM objectives early in the design and procurement process, as several minimum standards depend on decisions that cannot easily be addressed retrospectively. Early coordination between the client, design team, contractor and sustainability consultants will therefore be increasingly important in securing higher BREEAM ratings.

BREEAM V7 changes.
What are the drivers?

Industry alignment.

BREEAM RF & FT V7 improves alignment across BREEAM schemes and international frameworks, combining the previous UK and International approaches into one framework with tailored routes for refurbishment and fit-out. The updates also increase alignment with the EU Taxonomy and wider sustainability reporting frameworks, making the scheme more relevant for investors and clients seeking demonstrable ESG performance.

Alignment with:
BREEAM In-Use
EU taxonomy

Performance.

Focus shifts on several themes from design intentions to verified performance. The framework places greater emphasis on predicting and measuring the performance of existing assets and the systems being upgraded, including operational energy and carbon, embodied carbon and water consumption. This reflects a broader industry move towards accountability and net zero targets, encouraging early-stage modelling and data-driven decision-making.

Alignment with:
UK Net Zero Carbon Building
BREEAM In-Use

Whole life thinking and circular economy.

There is a greater focus on assessing environmental impact across the full lifecycle of existing buildings and the interventions made to them. Enhanced Life Cycle Assessment and embodied carbon reporting sit alongside greater focus on material efficiency, reuse, adaptability and disassembly, helping retain material value through future refurbishment and fit-out cycles. This is particularly relevant to BREEAM FT V7, reflecting the shorter replacement cycles of commercial interiors, while BREEAM RF V7 broadens building-level assessment to include MEP systems and infrastructure.

Alignment with:
RICS Professional Standard (whole life carbon assessment for the built environment)

Environment and pollution.

Requirements are tightened around environmental impact and pollution, with more stringent standards on refrigerants, stronger controls on air and water pollution, and a greater push towards fossil-fuel-free building services at the highest rating level. BREEAM RF V7 places significantly greater emphasis on climate resilience and adaptation, alongside strengthened requirements for surface-water management and biodiversity enhancement. Together, these changes aim to reduce environmental harm while improving the long-term resilience and future-readiness of assets.

Alignment with:
EU taxonomy
Statuatory biodiversity metric (RF only)

Health and wellbeing.

Social and human aspects take a more prominent role, with refined criteria for natural and electric light, indoor air quality, acoustics, thermal comfort and the non-visual effects of light. The changes place greater emphasis on occupant comfort and experience, particularly relevant to BREEAM FT V7 and occupied interior spaces.

Alignment with:
EU taxonomy

Summary of major credit changes – See appendix A

Sustainability industry pioneers. Hoare Lea can help you.

Environmental sustainability sits at the heart of our firm's influence on the built environment. We have been delivering BREEAM at all levels on projects since 1990.

We have 19 licensed BREEAM assessors, supported by a team of over 100 sustainability professionals, with specialist skills in sustainability and environmental design complimented by a proven track record of delivering BREEAM certification across a multitude of projects.

650
Certified projects

33
Outstanding

264
Excellent

19
Licensed BREEAM assessors

15
BREEAM APs

BREEAM Accredited Professionals (APs).

Our BREEAM APs draw on real project experience to optimise the scoring strategy in support of the client's ambitions. We collaborate with the team to understand the project drivers and identify where BREEAM can add the most value.

A multi-disciplinary offer.

MEP Design
- Optimising HVAC systems to maximise credits inc. refrigerants to lower GWP
- BREEAM specification clauses

Air Quality
- Indoor Air Quality Plans
- Advice on ventilation pathways
- Integrate good air quality into the design

Security
- Security Needs Assessments
- Engineering-led, risk-based, threat-informed systems approach to provide clients with a fully coordinated design

Acoustics
- Optimise sound insulation, indoor ambient noise levels and room acoustics
- Surveying, design and commissioning

Whole Life Carbon
- Passive Design Analysis
- Low/zero carbon feasibility studies
- Calculation of energy performance
- Prediction of Operational Energy
- Identifying energy efficient systems
- Thermal comfort assessments
- Lifecycle analysis to identify carbon hotspots and help clients meet targets
- Third party verification
- Sustainable Procurement Plans

Vertical Transport
- Optimised lift design to achieve energy and carbon savings in operation

Lighting
- Daylight analysis
- Visual performance and comfort delivered through careful artificial lighting design and considered occupant controls
- Sensitive lighting design to minimise external pollution

APPENDIX A

Major credit changes.

Performance.

Issue	BREEAM RF v7	BREEAM FT V7
Man 05 Aftercare	**In-use commissioning: 1 credit** – replaces Seasonal commissioning and is strengthened **Zero carbon transition planning: 1 exemplary credit** – new route replacing the previous exemplary credit NEW EXEMPLARY CREDIT	**Aftercare support: removed** **Zero carbon transition planning: 1 exemplary credit** – new route replacing the previous exemplary credit
Ene 01 Energy and carbon performance for regulated energy uses	**Asset Energy Calculator: updated to assess energy performance attributable to in-scope fabric and regulated building services.** **Calculated energy performance improvement: up to 12 credits**	**Calculated energy performance improvement: up to 3 credits** – based on new/renovated regulated building services within the fit-out scope FT TAILORED
Ene 02 Prediction of operational energy and carbon	**Energy strategy: 1 credit** **Prediction of operational energy consumption: up to 3 credits** **Risk assessment and mitigation: 1 credit** **Predicted operational energy performance score: up to 7 credits** **Outstanding minimum standard: no fossil fuel use by in-scope building services and equipment** NEW ISSUE	**Predictive energy modelling: 1 credit** **Predicted operational energy performance score: up to 3 credits** **Commitment to measure energy consumption in-use: 1 exemplary credit** **Minimum standard:** no fossil fuel use by in-scope building services and equipment NEW ISSUE
Ene 04 Low carbon design	**Fabric performance optimisation: up to 2 credits** – new performance-based fabric credits **LZC energy generation: 1 credit** – heat pumps, including ASHPs, are no longer recognised as LZC generation; their efficiency benefits are recognised under Ene 01 / Ene 02 **Low carbon design: up to 4 credits** NEW ISSUE	Not within scope for BREEAM FT V7
Ene 05 Energy efficient equipment	**Energy efficient equipment: up to 5 credits** – reworked from the former Ene 08 issue; credits are based on the proportion of in-scope equipment energy use that is efficient	**Energy efficient equipment: up to 5 credits** – same proportional approach for in-scope fit-out equipment

Continues on following page

Performance.

Issue	BREEAM RF v7	BREEAM FT V7
Ene 06 Energy efficient systems	**Energy efficient systems: up to 9 credits** – major reconfiguration combining former energy issues and widening the assessment to a broader range of in-scope energy-using systems. Credits are based on the proportion of system energy use that is energy efficient NEW ISSUE	**Energy efficient systems: up to 9 credits** – same proportional approach applied to systems within the fit-out scope NEW ISSUE
Ene 07 Flexible demand response	**Flexible demand response: up to 2 credits** – rewards in-scope electrical systems with demand-response capability NEW ISSUE	**Flexible demand response: up to 2 credits** – filterable where the building does not use electricity. NEW ISSUE
Ene 08 Installed controls	**Installed controls: up to 2 credits** – rewards controls that enable building services to respond more efficiently to energy demand NEW ISSUE	Not within scope for BREEAM FT V7
Wat 01 Water consumption	**Water consumption thresholds** – increase to ≥15%, ≥30%, ≥45%, ≥60% and ≥75% for 1–5 credits, with ≥85% for exemplary performance; the highest standard and exemplary thresholds are 20 percentage points higher than BREEAM RFO 2014	**Water consumption: up to 2 credits** – no exemplary credit; filterable where no in-scope water-using components are present FT TAILORED
Wat 04 Water efficient equipment and systems	**Water efficient equipment and systems** – up to 3 credits – credits now reflect estimated water consumption and the proportion served by efficient equipment/systems	**Water efficient equipment and systems: 1 credit** – Fit Out-specific threshold and scope FT TAILORED
Wat 05 Prediction of operational water consumption	**Predict operational water consumption: 1 credit** **Disclosing an in-use water performance target and commitment to measure water consumption in-use: 1 exemplary credit** – new exemplary route NEW ISSUE	Not within scope for BREEAM FT V7

Whole life thinking and circular economy.

Issue	BREEAM RF v7	BREEAM FT V7
Man 02 Life cycle cost and service life planning	Minor credit changes	**LCC options appraisal for fit out: 2 credits** – replaces the former 3-credit elemental and component-level LCC structure. **Capital cost reporting: removed** FT TAILORED
Mat 01 Building life cycle assessment	**Building life cycle assessment: 7 credits + 3 exemplary credits** – rewritten around staged building-level LCA and embodied-carbon reporting **LCA and embodied carbon reporting: 5 credits + 2 exemplary** – staged LCA/embodied-carbon reporting, third-party verification and public data disclosure NEW CREDITS	**Building life cycle assessment** – uses the V7 LCA and embodied-carbon methodology but omits the embodied-carbon benchmark comparison credits. **Credit structure: 5 credits + 2 exemplary** – staged LCA/embodied-carbon reporting, third-party verification and public data disclosure FT TAILORED
Wst 01 Construction waste management	**Reuse and direct recycling** – former 2-credit criterion is removed because reuse/recycling is addressed elsewhere; the standard-credit ceiling reduces from 7 to 4 **Construction waste management: 4 standard credits** – overall standard maximum	**Pre-fit-out resource audit: 1 credit** – Fit Out-specific audit replaces the refurbishment audit. **Construction resource efficiency: up to 2 credits** – uses Fit Out-specific benchmarks FT TAILORED
Wst 06 Disassembly and adaptability	**Disassembly and adaptability: 2 credits** – increased from the single 2014 Functional adaptability credit; methodology revised to align with ISO 20887.	**Design for disassembly and adaptability (Recommendations): 1 credit** – new two-stage V7 structure. **Design for disassembly and adaptability (Implementation): 1 credit** – overall issue increases to 2 credits compared with the former single 2014 adaptability credit. Criteria are adapted to fit-out interior systems and future disassembly, reuse, relocation and reconfiguration FT TAILORED

Environment and pollution.

Issue	BREEAM RF v7	BREEAM FT V7
Rsl 01-06 Resilience	**New Resilience category** – brings together climate and natural-hazard screening, resilience strategy and implementation, protection against human error and malicious damage, surface-water run-off and local resilience NEW ISSUE	Not within scope for BREEAM FT V7
Lue 02-05 Ecology	**Ecology** – major V7 restructure into Ecological risks and opportunities, Managing impacts on ecology, Ecological change and enhancement, and Long term ecological management **New V7 requirements** – biodiversity change is quantified using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric in the UK or national/international biodiversity net-gain tools elsewhere; bird-window collision and ecology handover requirements are introduced NEW ISSUES	Not within scope for BREEAM FT V7
Pol 01 Impact of refrigerants	**Impact of refrigerants: 3 credits** – restructured around no refrigerant use, low-GWP options and leak detection **Outstanding minimum standard** – No refrigerant use (3 credits), OR refrigerants have an emissions rate <1,000 $kgCO_2e/kW$ (1 credit – Impact of refrigerant)	Aligns with RF V7
Pol 02 Local air quality	**No or low emission combustion plant: up to 3 credits** – criteria are simplified to NOx only; common limits apply across appliance types and the lower limit is linked to low population density	Aligns with RF V7
Pol 03 Minimising watercourse pollution	**Minimising watercourse pollution: 1 credit** – issue is narrowed to watercourse pollution only; flood-risk and surface-water run-off requirements move into Resilience	Not within scope for BREEAM FT V7
Pol 05 Reduction of noise pollution	**Noise level: 1 credit** – noise must be at least 5 dB below background levels during both day and night; predictive modelling is permitted	Aligns with RF V7

Health and wellbeing.

Issue	BREEAM RF v7	BREEAM FT V7
Hea 01 Natural light	**Natural light** – restructured from 2014 Visual comfort around glare control, daylighting, direct sunlight and view out **Direct sunlight to windows: 1 credit** **View out: 1 credit** **Evaluating glare from daylight: 1 exemplary credit** – new numerical-analysis route NEW ISSUE	**Natural light** – aligns with RF V7, but Daylighting uses the BREEAM In-Use approach and the daylighting exemplary credits are excluded FT TAILORED
Hea 02 Electric light	**Electric light** – dedicated issue separated from the former Visual comfort issue, with a new Flicker prerequisite **Internal lighting / Zoning and occupant control: 1 credit each** – zoning and occupant control is now a distinct credit **Lighting control: 1 exemplary credit** – new route for dimming range and colour tuning NEW ISSUE	**Electric light: 2 credits + 1 exemplary** – external lighting is excluded and relevant criteria can be filtered where internal lighting or controls are outside the fit-out scope FT TAILORED
Hea 03 Non-visual effects of light	**Non-visual effects of light: 1 credit** – supporting a healthy circadian rhythm NEW ISSUE	**Non-visual effects of light – 1 credit** – filterable where no material changes are made to internal lighting NEW ISSUE
Hea 04 Indoor air quality	**Post-construction indoor air quality measurement: up to 2 credits** – increased from 1 credit in 2014 **Emissions from furniture products: 1 exemplary credit** – new exemplary route **Minimum standards / competency** – IAQ plan and smoking-ban requirements IAQ plan and smoking-ban requirements apply from Very Good; an IAQ professional is required for the plan and post-construction testing.	**Indoor air quality: 6 credits + 3 exemplary** – criteria are filterable where ventilation systems, pathways or filtration systems are outside the fit-out scope FT TAILORED
Hea 07 Safe and accessible design	**Safe access: 1 credit** – new criterion **Outside space: 1 credit** – new criterion **Accessible design: 1 credit + 1 exemplary credit** – new criterion and exemplary route **Former Hea 03 Safe containment in laboratories: removed (-2 credits)** NEW ISSUE	**Accessible design: 1 credit + 1 exemplary credit** – only the accessible-design route is available in FT

The tables highlight the principal changes in credit structure, scope and methodology from BREEAM RFO 2014; minor wording, clarification and evidence updates are not shown.

APPENDIX B

FAQs.

What is the difference between UKNC V7 and RF/FT V7?
BREEAM UKNC V7 is designed to assess the design and construction of new buildings, whereas BREEAM RF & FT V7 is tailored to works to existing buildings and subsequent fit-out stages. The schemes form part of the same wider BREEAM V7 framework and share many of the same sustainability principles and methodologies, but the requirements are adapted to reflect the different scope, opportunities and constraints associated with refurbishment and fit-out projects.

When was BREEAM RF & FT V7 released?
BREEAM RF & FT V7 was released on 15 July 2026, with separate technical standards for BREEAM RF V7 and BREEAM FT V7. The standards are available, but registration did not open at the point of release.

When can I register for BREEAM RF & FT V7?
Registrations for BREEAM RF & FT V7 opened on 24th September 2026. Assessments are registered through the BREEAM Platform by appropriately licensed BREEAM Assessors.

How long do I have to register under BREEAM RFO 2014?
The BRE has confirmed that projects can continue to register under BREEAM UK RFO 2014 until 27th January 2027. After this date, BREEAM UK RFO 2014 will close to new registrations.

How long will a BREEAM RFO 2014 registration remain valid?
In order for a registration to be remain valid, at least one formal submission (design or post construction) will need to be made no more than 5 years following the launch of registrations for the V7 manual.

How will BREEAM RF & FT V7 change how we work?
BREEAM is intended to move industry practice forward, and BREEAM RF & FT V7 raises the level of assessment in a number of areas. Projects are likely to require greater consideration of operational and embodied carbon, performance outcomes and specialist inputs, making early BREEAM engagement increasingly important.

While this may make some requirements more challenging, the outcome is a more robust and performance-led rating based on current industry thinking, providing projects with an opportunity to demonstrate higher sustainability performance and market leadership.

Should I update my existing BREEAM RFO 2014 registration to V7?
This should be considered on a project-by-project basis. BREEAM RF & FT V7 introduces substantial new criteria, methodologies and minimum standards, so the benefits of moving to V7 should be considered against the project's stage, existing design strategy, programme and likely additional assessment requirements.

BRE's wider V7 guidance confirms that an existing registration can be moved to a newer version of the same scheme and type, and that changing version does not itself attract an additional BRE fee.

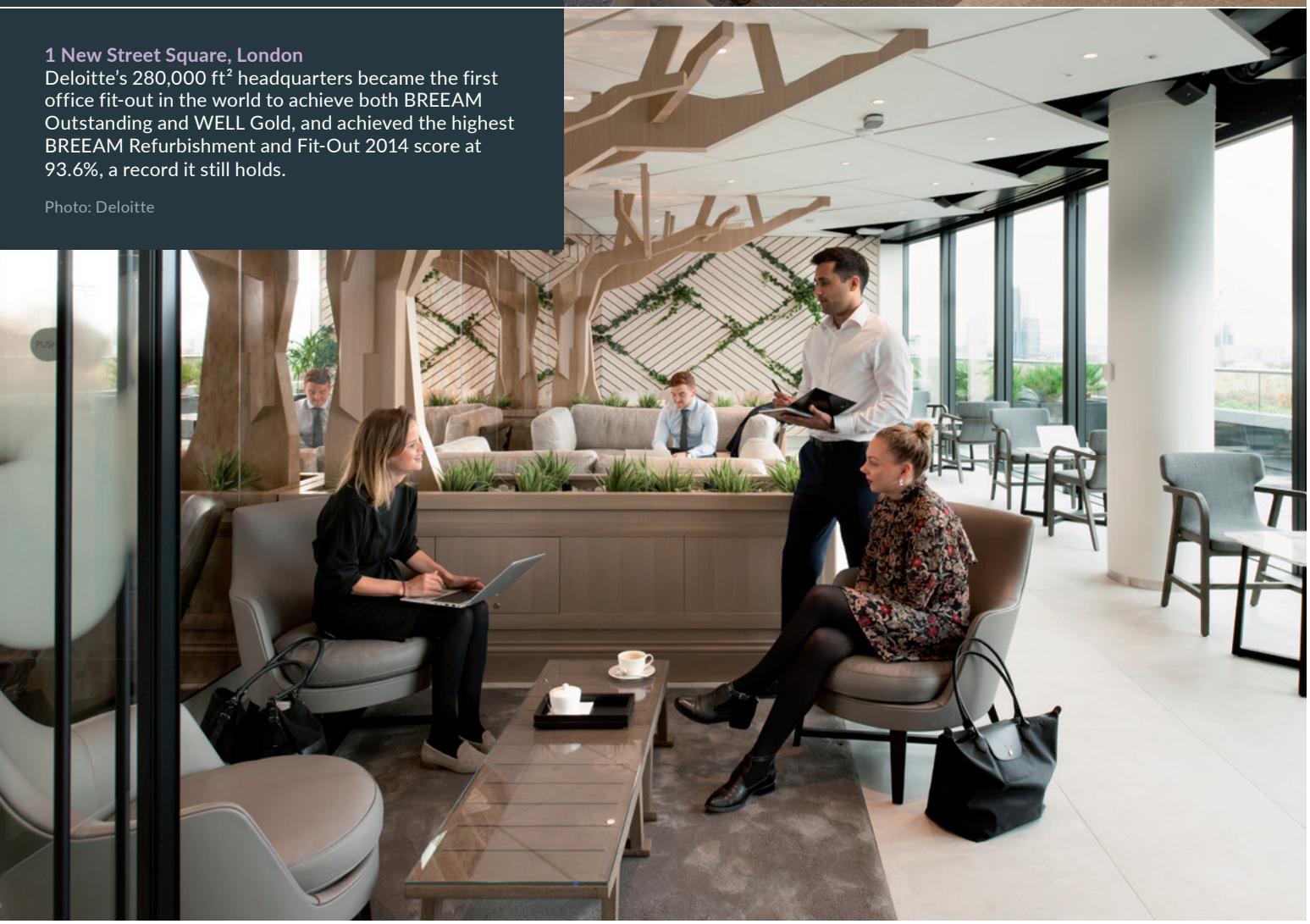


170 Piccadilly, London
The refurbishment brought together two Grade II listed buildings, Egyptian House and Dudley House, to create 27,700 ft² of flexible serviced office space. Despite significant heritage constraints, the project achieved BREEAM Excellent, with performance aligned to NABERS principles equivalent to 4.5 and and incorporating evidence-based design principles to support occupant health and wellbeing.

Photo: Ed Reeve

1 New Street Square, London
Deloitte's 280,000 ft² headquarters became the first office fit-out in the world to achieve both BREEAM Outstanding and WELL Gold, and achieved the highest BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit-Out 2014 score at 93.6%, a record it still holds.

Photo: Deloitte



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This document was correct at the time of writing and reflects the BREEAM RF & FT V7 information available at that date. BREEAM requirements, guidance and implementation arrangements may be subject to subsequent updates or clarification.

Engineers of human experiences.

Hoare Lea is an award-winning engineering consultancy with a creative team of engineers, designers, and technical specialists. We provide innovative solutions to complex engineering and design challenges for buildings.

Irrespective of the scale or complexity of a project, we provide a full range of MEP, environmental, and sustainability services, bringing buildings to life and ensuring that they perform in operation as well as they look.

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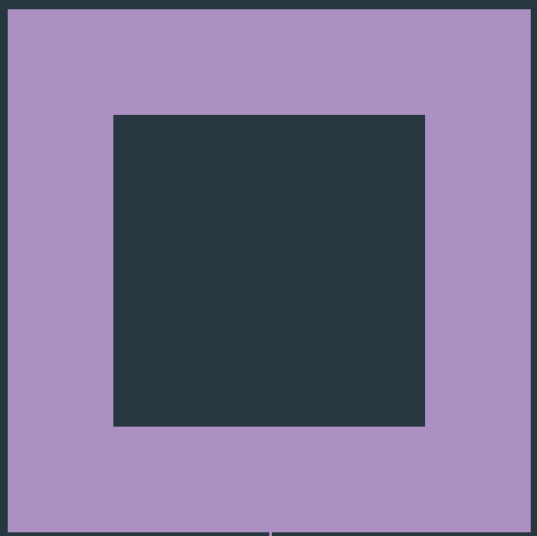
LETS TALK

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