

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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## Paragraph 4.122

### Energy Efficiency

While remarking that “The built environment accounts for over half of the UK’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, through both construction and use” this paragraph does not distinguish between new build and refurbishment.

A study *New Tricks with Old Bricks*<sup>1</sup>, carried out in 2008 for the Building and Social Housing Foundation in co-operation with Empty Homes, found that although new homes are more energy efficient once built, 50 tonnes of carbon emissions are generated in their construction, compared to 15 tonnes for the refurbishment of an existing property. In most of the houses studied, it took more than 50 years for this difference to be compensated for by the lower carbon emissions generated from the day-to-day energy use. And it went on to suggest that many of today’s new homes would themselves need refurbishment before the 50 years had passed.

We suggest that refurbishment, particularly if it involves making old houses more energy efficient, should form part of the mix and would contribute to the achieving of national and local targets. On a unit-by-unit basis, it would also generate more locally-based employment in the building trades than is likely to be provided by volume housebuilders using kit-based construction.

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1 <https://bshf-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/New-Tricks-with-Old-Bricks1.pdf>