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## Green Sky thinking

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Bere Architects, whose new offices I went to check out last week, is one of 25 practices who will open their doors next week as part of Green Sky Studios, a new Open House initiative which will takes place on Sept 24-26, following Open House weekend.



At the new offices for Bere Architects

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Other Green Sky Studios events on my hit list are: BACA Architects' LIFE (Long-term Initiatives for Flood-Risk Environments) project, BDP's sustainable masterplan for Prague, Hawkins Brown's presentation of its forthcoming publication 'Sustainable Urban Design' with Max Fordham, and Riches Hawley Mikhail Architects' recently completed hemp houses in Elmswell, Suffolk, served up



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• Author: Hattie Hartman.



Bere Architects had been in its new premises - The Muse, in a mews in Newington Green, Islington, just a week when I turned up. Trite puns aside, it's an inspiring place. My impressions may have been a bit rose-coloured because the sun emerged for the first time in days, so I toured the multiple green roofs and met with Justin Bere amidst Kim Wilkie's (V&A Courtyard) luxuriant planting. Bespoke birchwood ply planters are filled with a profusion of crocosmia and native fuchsias – the well-established planting has only been in since February.



The roofscape boasts four zones with a variety of soil depths planted in radically different ways: 47cm deep for a stand of hawthorn at the upper level, 34 cm depth for a woodland area of hazel underplanted with bluebells and Solomon's Seal, a 15cm deep wildflower meadow and a shallow 'quilt' of 7 cm below the solar thermal panels with sedum-like vegetation, not to mention a lap pool soon to be filled with chlorine-free water whose overflow will flush the loos.



Justin is a purist and a PassivHaus disciple – one of a handful of UK architects who have attended the annual PassivHaus conference two years running, and he plans to return. He says his house cum studio is designed 'towards PassivHaus standard' with a minimum of 300mm insulation (more in places) and triple-glazed windows by Double Good (a German product which Bere now imports). One of his biggest challenges was to locate the Tyvek tape to seal the joints between the Tyvek sheeting. "The sheeting is useless without the tape," says Bere.



I was offered a delicious lunch on the roof before I had to rush off to my next appointment. If you go along next week, you will get to visit the office, hear a presentation by Justin on the PassivHaus Planning Package (PHPP), and enjoy an organic lunch. Don't miss it.

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