

Press Release

Essential Homes Research Project | Venice Architecture Biennale 2023



Madrid, 18 May 2023

- Essential Homes Research Project now on view in Venice during 2023 Biennale of Architecture.
- 20 May - 26 November 2023.
- Prototype at the Marinaressa Gardens. Exhibition at Palazzo Mora.

The Essential Homes Research Project of the Norman Foster Foundation and Holcim was presented yesterday in Venice during the opening of the Architecture Biennale.

The Essential Homes Research Project by the Norman Foster Foundation and Holcim was inaugurated in Venice at the occasion of 2023 Biennale of Architecture launch. In this partnership the Norman Foster Foundation designed the housing concept to meet essential human needs, providing safety, comfort and wellbeing for people in displacement, who can live in temporary settlements for decades. Holcim brought the project to life with a range of its sustainable building solutions, making it low-carbon, energy-efficient and circular, demonstrating how sustainable building can be possible for all.

A real-size prototype will be placed in the Marinaressa Gardens, and an exhibition hosted in Palazzo Mora will present the development of the project. Perfectly in line with the Biennale's theme 'Laboratories of the Future', this research project opens the conversation around providing essential housing for all.

Norman Foster, President of the Norman Foster Foundation: 'How can we ensure everyone, including some of our world's most vulnerable populations, can have access to decent living conditions? During the Venice Biennale we show our work-in-progress on this idea; the outcome of a few months of intensive activity in collaboration with Holcim.'

Jan Jenisch, Chairman & CEO, Holcim: 'I am very excited about the potential for impact coming out of this collaboration. It enables essential homes that are built with some of our low carbon, energy-efficient and circular building solutions, showcasing how sustainable building can be possible for all!'

The Essential Homes Research Project provides safety, comfort and wellbeing. Highly sustainable, this home has a 70% lower CO2 footprint compared to traditional structures. It includes a range of Holcim sustainable building solutions making it low-carbon, energy-efficient and circular. It is made of:

- Low-carbon rollable concrete sheets serving as an external shell, providing physical safety.
- Permeable pathways made of ECOPact low-carbon concrete connecting the homes, including light-absorbing aggregates reflecting natural light at night, reducing energy use and light pollution.
- Energy-efficient insulation systems from Elevate boards to low-carbon Airium foam to ensure thermal and acoustic comfort.
- Driving circular construction, Holcim's ECOCycle®, recycled construction demolition materials are used to make the base of the Essential Home more weather resilient.
- Circular by design with modular units, at the end of use, each component of the Essential Homes model can be reused or recycled.

The Essential Homes Research Project opens the fundamental conversation about making sustainable building accessible to all, to build a future that works for people and the planet.





Norman Foster Foundation

The Norman Foster Foundation promotes interdisciplinary thinking and research to help new generations anticipate the future. The first mission of the Norman Foster Foundation is to make visible the centrality of architecture, infrastructure, and urbanism for the betterment of society. To this end, the second mission is to encourage new thinking and research across traditional boundaries in order to help younger generations anticipate the challenges of future change. In particular, the foundation speaks to those professionals who are concerned with the environment architects, engineers, designers, urbanists, civic leaders, planners, and artists. This is at the heart of the Foundation's holistic approach to design and is ever more relevant as populations shift to cities. With the implications of climate change, robotics and artificial intelligence, sustainable design is not about fashion but about survival.

The Foundation holds the Norman Foster Archive and Library, which provide a window into the larger narrative and history of our built environment through the work of Norman Foster. This is complemented and supported by drawings and models from other significant architects such as Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Charles and Ray Eames, Buckminster Fuller, Richard Rogers, Zaha Hadid and Tadao Ando. Through its research initiatives and programmes, the Norman Foster Foundation encourages the transfer of advanced knowledge in a wide range of design fields. The Foundation's educational initiatives are structured around research, workshops, fellowships and forums, built around the Foundation's core objectives.

The Norman Foster Foundation acts from the United Kingdom, New York and Spain, with its headquarters in Madrid.

Holcim

Holcim is a global leader in innovative and sustainable building solutions. Driven by its purpose to build progress for people and the planet, its 60,000 employees are on a mission to decarbonize building, while improving living standards for all. The company empowers its customers across all regions to build better with less, with its broad range of low-carbon and circular solutions, from ECOPact to ECOPlanet. With its innovative systems, from Elevate's roofing to PRB's insulation, Holcim makes buildings more sustainable in use, driving energy efficiency and green retrofitting. With sustainability at the core of its strategy, Holcim is becoming a net-zero company with 1.5°C targets validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). Learn more about Holcim on www.holcim.com.

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