



Andrew is constructing a sustainable future

Andrew Nicholson is Director of Killeel firm A&HNicholson Ltd, a local construction company who offer a range of services including new builds, loft conversions and extensions. His job role involves planning and tender work, monitoring social sustainability and health and safety management.



Andrew has always had an interest in sustainability methods and as this is a growing area of construction he wanted to gain a greater understanding of how buildings are constructed and refurbished into low energy buildings that use modern construction technologies with the proper sustainable materials selection.

It was this interest and building background that encouraged him to apply for a place on the 'Building Skills for Sustainable Construction' programme organised by CITB NI and funded by the European Commission's Leonardo programme which is managed by Ecorys in the UK. The programme was delivered by KOMZET (a Centre of Vocational Excellence in Timber Construction and Finishings) and involved two weeks training in Biberach, Germany focusing on sustainable construction methods, renewable energy and environmental standards.

Speaking about the training Andrew said, "It was a great training programme that incorporates traditional training methods with practical elements. The classroom and workshop activities are well balanced and can let someone share their practical experience in an open environment with other participants. Language training certainly was helpful it helped with some cultural issues and also learning simple everyday phrases that any person would use in a courteous manner."

Speaking about the German construction industry Andrew said, "German construction promotes high standards of efficiency by using practical solutions using proper material selection and by combining these with new modern methods of construction.

Germany is trying to reduce energy consumption by integrating new low energy construction systems in buildings i.e. less energy usage for the consumer. The German culture regarding housing is somewhat different to what we are used to in Northern Ireland, houses are built for long term living and people do not tend to move very often. They therefore see the benefits of energy efficient methods over longer periods of time.”

Since returning from Germany Andrew has been working hard to encourage clients to assess their designs regarding low energy construction whilst trying to be realistic about what is practical and realistic in the environment in which we live. Andrew is also completing his MSC dissertation which focuses on ‘Client issues and expectations of low energy domestic new builds’ and feels the ‘Building Skills for Sustainable Construction’ programme has given him a further insight into this area and the impact that it can have.

