

KASTARCHITECTS

IMPACT REPORT 2026

Certified



Corporation



Clay workshop with Be Creative

About us

At KAST Architects, we have a desire to help our clients live, work and play more sustainably.

The construction industry is extremely carbon intensive, so, as architects, we have a duty to ensure the designs we deliver minimise their impact on our planet.

Sustainability underpins, over-arches and threads through our approach to each project and is fully integrated within the design process.

We have always believed that there is a better way to do business and so over the years have tried to conduct ourselves in a respectful, ethical and mindful manner.

As a B Corp we have a framework for how we can improve as a business, balancing how we value people, the planet and profit.

This impact report reflects on the four years since we certified as a B Corp and also charts our progress over the past 12 months as we continue to search for small but meaningful ways in which we can improve the way we operate.



Topsails, Feock

Leadership letter

Sustainable design has always been at the heart of everything we do at KAST.

It was the core driver when we established the practice back in 2014 and we are proud of the work we have produced over the past 11 years, delivering low carbon solutions with integrity, that are modern and yet sensitive to their context.

Designing buildings in a way that minimises their environmental impact will always be a passion of ours, and over the years we have made sure that this is balanced with how we care for our co-workers, our dealings with customers, the communities in which we work and how we run our business.

In this time of geo-political unease, sluggish markets and investor caution it would be tempting to push these aspirations to one side, to go for the easy option...

...however, we have made a commitment to our planet and to the next generation to do better and to use business as a force for good.

Nicholas James
Founding Director



Community Roots, Porthtowan

Business since certification

It has now been four years since our certification as a B Corp and during that time we have been searching for those incremental positive changes that we can make as a business.

By becoming a B Corp you are committing to a cycle of continuous improvement, which to begin with can seem daunting, however, by embedding that culture within the business it becomes a natural part of your day to day operation.

We didn't set out to use our B Corp status as a means to generate more business. Far from it, indeed we have found that drawing a line in the sand can make you question which clients you work with or projects you work on! But as the saying goes, "Those who stand for nothing will fall for anything."

As time has gone by we have found that being a B Corp business has opened new doors for us, sometimes due to a client's curiosity about what it means and increasingly resulting in new commissions.

By far the the most beneficial aspect of being a B Corp is the learning that comes from meeting a broad range of like minded businesses and individuals from many different sectors, all of whom are happy to share their knowledge, learning and ideas.



Still Waters, Trolver Croft

B Corp verified score

Recertification

In March 2022 KAST certified with a score of 84.9 out of a possible 200. By comparison, the median score for most businesses is 50.9.

This demonstrates how difficult it is to become a B Corp, however, we were acutely aware of how much more we can improve by.

Our aim for when we re-certified in 2025 was to achieve a score in excess of 90. Needless to say we were absolutely stoked to score 97.1.

While the new B Corp Standards have moved away from points scoring, we will use this strong foundation to meet the 7 new mandatory impact topics and implement the continuous, phased improvement over a five year period.

We remain committed to ensure our business balances people, planet and profit, where all are treated with equal respect and purpose.

Since our recertification we have been reflecting on what changes we have made to the business over the years that have resulted in an increase to our B Corp verified score.



- 97.1 Overall B Impact Score
- 80.0 Qualifies for B Corp Certification
- 50.9 Median Score for Ordinary Businesses

AJ SMALL PROJECTS 2026

AJ SMALL PROJECTS 2026

For more than three decades, AJ Small Projects, now in its 31st year, has championed brilliant design realised on a small canvas – architecture delivered to tight briefs and budgets but with a big imaginative heft.

This year, more than 170 projects were entered for the awards. These have been whittled down to a shortlist of 20 impressive and inventive projects, which are all showcased in this exhibition.

All were completed for budgets up to £399,000. While the maximum budget has changed over the years, the core intention of the awards has remained the same – to celebrate small projects that are bigger than the sum of their parts, delivering more for less through design excellence.

The shortlist spans a rich mix of typologies, from public realm improvements to studios, cafés, theatre lobbies, pavilions, community hubs and domestic extensions. These projects show how good design can make everyday lives better – whether through accessibility, shared spaces or simple moments of delight.

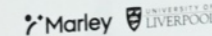
Sustainability and circular economy

principles are embedded throughout, particularly in the use of natural materials such as cork, wood fibre, limecrete and timber, alongside increased reuse, be it joinery, bricks, stone, or, in one case, roof vents repurposed as rooflights.

We are thrilled that this year's AJ Small Projects is being held outside London for the first time – at the University of Liverpool School of Architecture's brand-new extension by O'Donnell + Tuomey. All shortlisted practices present their projects in a live judging session.

This exhibition is accompanied by a display celebrating our 15-year partnership with Marley. We are so grateful to them for their longstanding sponsorship.

Thank you to our judges, to the University of Liverpool for hosting both the awards and this exhibition, exhibition designers Owen, our longtime sponsor Marley, and everyone who entered this year's AJ Small Projects.



AJ Small Projects People's Choice Winner

Why did we improve?

The incremental improvements have been evenly spread across the five pillars:

- Governance
- Workers
- Community
- Environment
- Customers

We have always felt it is important to give equal weight to these five areas to ensure a holistic approach to doing business better, and this will stand us in good stead for when the new B Corp Standards come in to affect for us.

With the new B Corp Standards, businesses will be required meet tailored minimum requirements across all of the 7 mandatory impact topics and not just cherry pick high scoring categories to off-set weaker ones.

Over the following pages we will outline the changes we have made in each of the impact areas and the positive impact it has had on us as a business.

Governance

Over the years, KAST has implemented a number of new policies and procedures to improve the governance of the business.

Moved to a more ethical bank for our business banking, Starling Bank, who amongst other things does not invest in businesses that are harmful to individuals, groups or society in general.

Started to calculate our office carbon footprint, helping us to identify means by which we can reduce our impact on the planet.

Committed to publishing our Annual Impact Reports, with a view to being more transparent in how we communicate our social and environmental performance to a wider audience.

This year the whole team undertook Carbon Literacy training through Green Works, a consultancy specialising in helping businesses understand their impact through everyday activities. The training provided us with the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community and organisational basis.



Aspects Holidays HQ, Hayle

Workers

Over the last few years we have worked hard to to improve the work / life balance for our team.

In 2022 KAST introduced a 9-day fortnight working pattern. Each team member takes every other Friday off to re-charge, connect with friends and family or go for a surf!

From a business perspective, there has been no discernible loss in profit or productivity; if anything, both have marginally improved. Importantly, staff energy, enthusiasm and happiness levels have all improved.

We have increased the employer pension contribution from the statutory 3% to 5%.

In terms of continual professional development, we have set aside funds for our staff to have the opportunity to increase their knowledge base through training courses. This raises confidence in their own ability and in turn raises the practice's offer to existing and potential clients.

We continue to make time for us as a team outside of the office. Whether that is a day on the beach, paddle-boarding up the creek, or spending a day on the moor planting trees, we ensure that its not all about being tied to a screen.



Tree planting with Plant One at Hamatethy

Community

KAST continues to maintain strong relationships with a number of local charities in Cornwall.

We are working with BF Adventure - a charity that uses the outdoor environment to enable children and young people to identify their own social, emotional and physical barriers, to choose their own challenges and to empower them to overcome these barriers and unlock their potential.

Last year we completed a new building for Community Roots, a CIC based in Porthtowan who adopt a 'no-dig' approach to growing organic vegetables for local people. They offer volunteer days and learning opportunities for the community, as well as hosting activities and events. In April 2026 the project won a national People's Choice Award.

We have recently engaged with Be Creative, an organisation whose programme aims to foster a supportive environment for students who struggled with traditional educational settings due to various reasons including neurological differences. We will be designing a new much needed base for them in north Cornwall.

While we didn't compete in the Castle to Castle swim event last year, our Director, Nick, decided to jump out of a plane to raise £1,600 for Prostate Cancer Research UK. It's okay, he was strapped to a lovely guy called Neil who made sure he landed safely.



Skydiving for Prostate Cancer Research

Environment

From day one, KAST has sought to minimise the environmental impact of its designs addressing both their embodied carbon and their operational carbon. Our buildings are designed and built with a respect for the people we work with and the planet whose resources we are borrowing.

We seek to minimise the amount of carbon intensive materials used in their construction, such as concrete and steel, turning to more natural and renewable materials such as timber. We also work hard to introduce more innovative solutions to our buildings, such as the straw bale construction of a house in north Cornwall and the move from steel to cross laminated timber on a school in Leicestershire.

Two of our team are fully certified Passivhaus designers and this approach to low energy design is applied to all of our projects. This tried & tested solution gives us a range of proven approaches to deliver net-zero-ready buildings.

We remain members of the Surfers Against Sewage Ocean Network - a bringing together of like minded businesses to help protect the UK's unique coastal environment.

KAST is also a Corporate Partner of Plant One, a Community Interest Company that brings businesses, individuals and landowners together to plant native trees in Cornish soil.



Woodland walk at Hamatehy

Customers

It goes without saying that our clients are incredibly important to us. To design someone's new home, office or community building is a huge privilege and responsibility. Every mark that we make on the page has a cost implication, either positive or negative and so we need to balance client aspiration, design concept and cost at every turn.

Much of our work is iterative - designing a building for a client, discussing options, refining and developing the preferred solution, taking it through the planning process, the technical design stages and on to site. By the time the building is complete there have been hours of conversations and discussions, each one refining the design to meet and exceed the client's expectations.

Customer feedback is tremendously critical in the work that we do, however, this is something that until now we have not formalised.

We have therefore developed a client questionnaire which we now issue at the end of each project. The questions go back to the beginning of the process, asking why they chose KAST, what we were like to work with and whether they would be likely to recommend us to others and why.

The responses collated so far have been wonderfully positive and useful in helping us drive the practice forwards.



Community Roots, Porthtowan

The year(s) ahead...

We will always be seeking new ways in which the practice can improve.

With the new B Corp Standards, businesses must meet tailored minimum requirements across all of the 7 mandatory impact topics and not just cherry pick high scoring categories to off-set weaker ones.

- Purpose and Stakeholder Governance
- Fair Work
- Justice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Human Rights
- Climate Action
- Environmental Stewardship and Circularity
- Government Affairs and Collective Action

Over the next two years we will be turning our attention to these new standards to ensure we achieve the right balance when the time comes for recertification in 2028.

We want to improve in a small way, every single day. We have a plan and will stick to it.



Oyster House, Port Navas

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Certified



Corporation