

CASE
STUDY

McCARTHY STONE
Life, well lived



Elevating Retirement Standards

The UK's leading developer and manager of retirement communities has been using IconSystem® since 2016 to centralise specs and standards information, and all of their project designs, drawings and models.

Elecosoft®

Enhancing Senior Living with McCarthy Stone

With [more than 18%](#) of the UK population now aged over 65, happiness and well-being in later life have become a greater concern. For 40 years, McCarthy Stone has been building a network of 475+ retirement developments across the UK to provide safe, practical living accommodation that doesn't compromise on style.

McCarthy Stone's 20,000 residents expect a level of quality and accessibility, wherever their development is located. The company uses IconSystem to provide a single source of truth for its specifications and standards data.

Key achievements delivered using IconSystem®:



Consistent results

Development standardisation has increased from 40% to 97% since implementing IconSystem.



Minimal waste

McCarthy Stone no longer needs a skip for the first 18 weeks of each building project.



Design assurance

From the outset, the company knows the costs, risks, material and resourcing requirements associated with every project.



Customer confidence

The residents of McCarthy Stone apartments know they're getting great quality accommodation that is tailored to their needs.



The Challenge: Pursuing Consistency and Quality

McCarthy Stone's key driver for investing in an information management system was standardisation. Before 2016, the company's specification and standards data was stored piecemeal, which made it difficult to ensure consistent working processes and project outcomes.

The design and development team looked at multiple solutions, but only one piece of software could link numerous projects with a single specs and standards database: IconSystem.

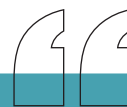
Through IconSystem, the company could centrally record every component that makes up a McCarthy Stone apartment, from kitchen and bathroom equipment to skirting boards and paint colours.

Documenting this level of detail is critical to McCarthy Stone's reputation, as each apartment is designed to be easily navigated, including with a walker or wheelchair. There are also specially adapted fixtures and fittings for the specialist needs of older clientele – for example, the toilet is set at a higher level than standard units.

"Choosing IconSystem was an easy decision. It was night and day compared to the other software we looked at," says Matt Richardson, Group Design and Development Director at McCarthy Stone.

McCarthy Stone was heavily invested in making IconSystem a success, so Matt set up a dedicated team to work on its implementation. He credits extensive testing as the secret to the software's smooth launch across a business of McCarthy Stone's size, describing the support they received from IconSystem staff as "remarkable".

In fact, both teams won [Best Use of IT in a Construction Project](#) at the 2017 Construction Computing Awards for their implementation of IconSystem.



We had information all over the place, on memory sticks and pieces of paper. Each division had a different way of doing things, which compounded issues and made it much harder to solve problems.

Matt Richardson

Group Design and Development Director,
McCarthy Stone

Implementing IconSystem: A Game-Changing Solution

Establishing a single source of truth has given McCarthy Stone complete visibility over its specification and standards data.

Every standard element is listed on IconSystem, and personnel can only make changes after updating the database, as each change notice requires an IconSystem reference number. This ensures IconSystem drives consistent projects rather than the database catching up with the company's latest practices.

In addition to improving clarity of project specifications and standards, moving to IconSystem has made McCarthy Stone's design and development team more accountable for their work.



We can trace every change back to the original suggestion or complaint, and we can demonstrate to the minute when a change was made and who instigated it. There's a rational explanation for everything we're doing.

Matt Richardson

Group Design and Development Director,
McCarthy Stone



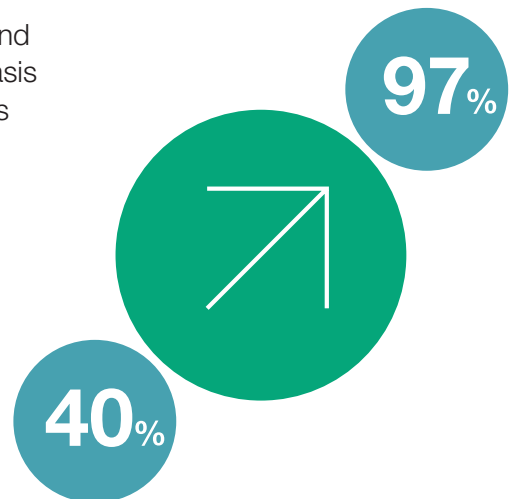
Tangible Outcomes: Standardisation and Waste Reduction

Standardising components using information management software has enabled McCarthy Stone to minimise unknowns, which is particularly valuable in the current construction climate.

When a new project begins, Matt and his team know the costs, risks, material and resourcing requirements; the only 'curve balls' are things beyond the team's immediate control.

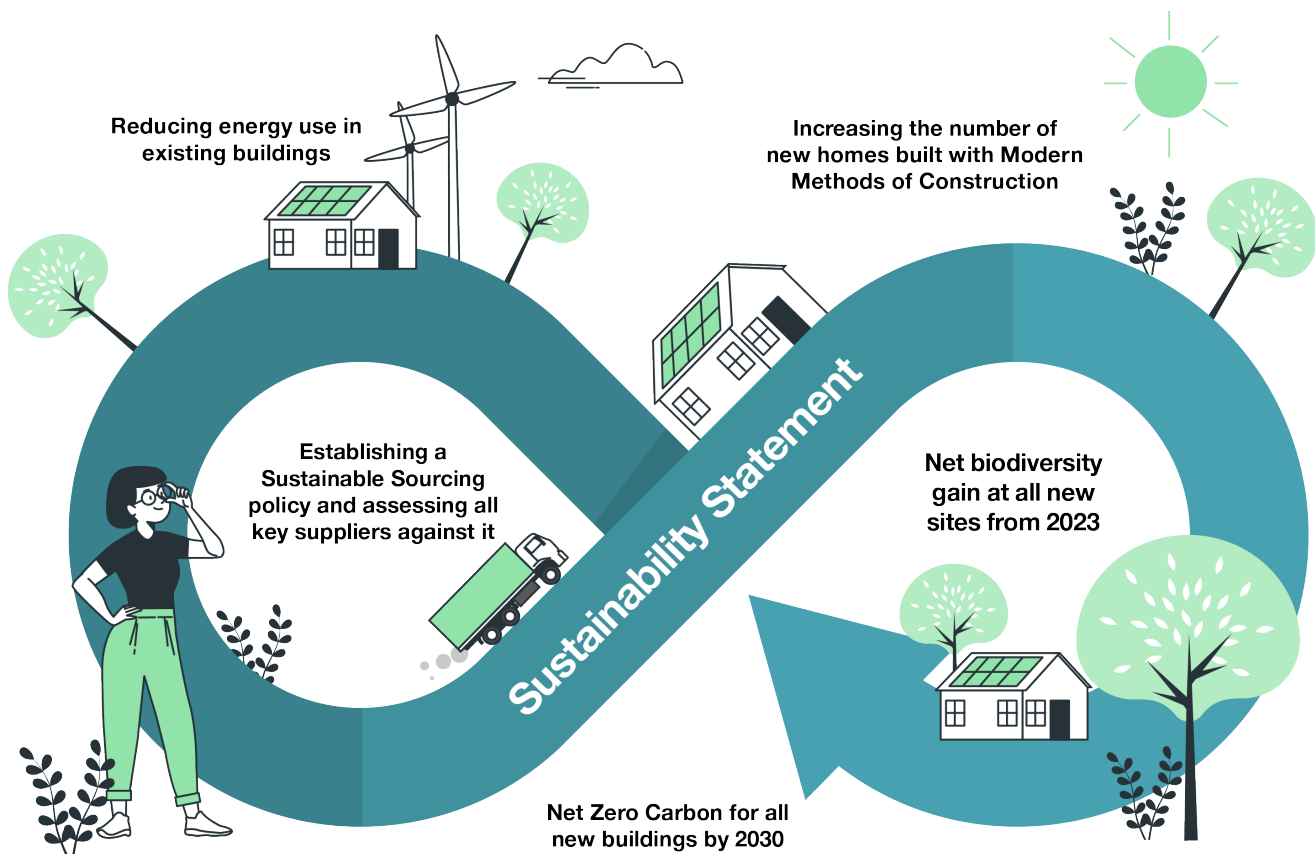
“By putting our design manual onto IconSystem, we’ve been able to look at our projects holistically and drill down into eachelement. Does it work commercially? Does it work for our construction team? Most importantly, does it work for our customers? Everyone has confidence in our designs.”

For complete design assurance, Matt and his team review and score every plan that McCarthy Stone produces on a risk basis using data from IconSystem. When the company started this process, it was working at a standardisation rate of 40%. Today, 97% of the apartments McCarthy Stone builds and fits are produced to the same specification.



Beyond the Build: Sustainability and Future Ambitions

It's not just risk that IconSystem has helped McCarthy Stone to reduce. In 2022, the company published a sustainability statement outlining a strategy for lowering its climate footprint. Targets included:



Improving specs and standards management has enabled McCarthy Stone to focus on materials and processes that minimise waste – for example, reducing the number of cuts made to plasterboard. “We’ve now got to a stage where we don’t need a skip for the first 18 weeks of a building project. That’s a pretty big achievement.”

Engage with IconSystem: Discover the Possibilities

With standardisation and sustainability strategies on track, Matt and his team are now assessing how IconSystem can add further value for McCarthy Stone. 3D modelling is next on their objectives list, integrating IconSystem data with BIM software.

McCarthy Stone was an early adopter of 3D modelling, but there are disadvantages to being ahead of the industry curve. While their approach won many awards, most architects could not model projects to their requirements, so they pressed pause to let the sector catch up. Now, Matt feels the time is right to re-explore 3D modelling.

“In reality, every site is different, and a building has to work within its context and meet the requirements of planning authorities. We’re building towards digital twinning projects that will enable us to 3D model site designs, and the backbone of that will be IconSystem.”

The design and development team’s ambition knows no bounds, and there are other areas they are keen to enhance. For example, McCarthy Stone currently uses Word documents to manage internal compliance processes, as asset management teams need to sign off on every design. Matt and his colleagues are now trialling a digital approval process using the forms function within IconSystem.

“We’re always thinking about how IconSystem can help us work smarter and improve processes. Sometimes our ambitions are ahead of what we can do with the system, but we’re continually seeking ways to reach our goals.”

**Create one version of the truth for every building, project and asset:
Contact us or book your own IconSystem® demo.**



Contact us

Email: iconsystem@elecosoft.com
<https://elecosoft.com/products/iconsystem/>

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