

# DOMESTIC RETROFIT COORDINATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

## Client Case Study: “Simple and Intuitive is Better”

### Saryu Vatal

#### Design Manager at Willmott Dixon Energy Services

Willmott Dixon Energy Services has a very strong commitment to improving energy efficiency of homes across the country and are working on some of the largest schemes in the UK. They believe in long-term partnering with clients, supporting the development, design and installation of energy efficiency measures. Their community based approach means that they create local jobs and training opportunities and support local energy efficiency initiatives



#### What was your main inspiration for taking the course?

Retrofit, unlike new build requires a very good understanding of the existing context. Any strategy and response needs to be sensitive not only to the cultural context but also to the physical condition and qualities of a building. In addition to technical knowledge, insight and experience are vital for this. The tutors on this course have years of practical experience of dealing with retrofit projects of varying degrees of complexity and it was very helpful to learn from their experiences of how to deal with complex building challenges. The modules covered both technical measures and practical considerations around realising a retrofit project, which provided a holistic training package.

#### What was the most interesting theme or message that you took from the sessions?

The most interesting thing for me was that in addition to the technical suitability of measures, it is important to take into account cultural and behavioural conditions when devising a retrofit strategy. While in many instances the end user may be unknown, keeping things simple and intuitive is better than maximising the technical potential of measures.

#### Have there been any tangible benefits that you can directly attribute to the course?

The focus on getting a good understanding of the existing building and its surroundings has helped inform the development of retrofit strategies in my current role. The lesson that it is better to have a robust strategy than a necessarily very ambitious one has been a very useful one.

#### Reflecting back, what are the main benefits you see in taking the Diploma?

A key benefit of the course was the opportunity for interaction with people from different perspectives and backgrounds with varying levels of experience of dealing with domestic refurbishments. This gave an understanding of how issues are prioritised and what outcomes are expected from retrofit projects, which is very valuable while setting and detailing project briefs.

#### Would you recommend the diploma to other people?

Absolutely. Being a retrofit coordinator requires one to come out of the silos of traditional roles and get a good understanding of how different trades and processes need to come together and watch out for potential issues from very early on. This course provides that overview with a balance between technical knowledge and practical considerations.

**“It is better to have a robust strategy than a necessarily very ambitious one.”**