



[Greenbuild Expo](#)

Manchester Central 26 - 27 May 2010

Reviewed by [Mark Iddon](#)

The Greenbuild Expo took place in Manchester last week to showcase new innovative products for the construction industry to utilise for a green and sustainable future. There were many competing companies for solar water heating panels, rainwater harvesting systems (to recycle rainwater for use in the home) and taps with restrictors to avoid wastage.

There were also seminars, debates and discussions on how the industry is changing particularly in the housing and schools sectors. There is quite a lot of enthusiasm for these products, by companies looking at how they can re-market their company's image with the prospect of a new green economy, and developers who are keen to see which products will fulfil the criteria both for government funding and to comply with new legislation. There is a lot of encouragement (coercion) from the government for new building to be more energy efficient and consume less energy over the building's lifetime.

What was missing from the event was any questioning of the assumptions of the sustainability

concept. The meaning of the word sustainability is about maintaining and continuing and is totally devoid of optimism or progress. It also embraces the precautionary principle of risk avoidance and assumes a deference to nature with it's emphasis on cutting waste with the prospect resource depletion. Sustainable also tends to be small, local and have minimum impact.

Real progress and development in the past whether it be the industrial revolution and the factory technique, transport or communication in the 20th century, has always been made by taking risks, defying natural limits and thinking on a larger scale.

Sustainability is based on devaluing human achievement and the potential to innovate and find new solutions to environmental issues.

We need to be advocates for a better future and make a defence for human consciousness to be held in higher esteem. In the meantime we need to raise questions about this presently acceptable face of conservative thinking for the foreseeable future.