

Increased concrete construction projects in the UK benefit from rapid electrical installation system

29 September 2026

The most successful installation boxes and electrical housing units are rarely seen. Particularly those designed for use in concrete construction that provide the hidden infrastructure on which the most important lighting, electrical and communication systems depend.

Once the concrete sets, different decisions or fault fixing becomes prohibitively expensive and time consuming. The UK construction sector has increasingly moved towards both pre-cast and in-situ concrete, particularly for critical projects like student accommodation and healthcare facilities as well as the growing number of data centres powering digital growth in the UK.

Previously, specifiers have relied on galvanised systems that come with cost and time implications. Recently, the sector has benefited from the development of user-friendly, easy-to-install systems like Spelsberg's IBT range, which was designed for fast, simple installation of electrical circuit into concrete structures, lowering labour costs and speeding up delivery.

Solutions designed to support the UK housing market

Affordable housing is one of the most pressing concerns in the UK, with developers and politicians working together to help more people find a route into property ownership as well as easing the pressure on the rental market.

The solution to the housing crisis is delivery of more affordable houses at a faster pace, and one solution is modular homes where a project involves multiple houses or flats with minimal variation. This can speed construction while also delivering high levels of quality and consistency as well as meeting regulatory requirements.

A recent project in London used a continental frame method of construction, where concrete is used for the façade and internal walls. The method saves time by eliminating false ceilings and dry lining. Importantly, it also allows for electrical services to be embedded into the concrete itself. The project specified Spelsberg's IBT system which allows electrical enclosures, junction boxes, lighting outlets and other types of housing to be fitted securely into formwork before concrete is poured around them.

The benefits of projects like this are clear for UK builders and house buyers alike: modular construction can reduce time and cost in a project. When this is coupled with suppliers like Spelsberg that can deliver a wide range of fittings, so everything is specified through one supplier, the benefits multiply.

High-quality results for high-tech installations

While growing the affordable housing stock is one significant challenge in the UK, another is delivering high-quality solutions for the growing demand for data infrastructure. Data centres support the growth of UK digital companies, and while they also benefit from fast lead times and high levels of consistency, the focus can more often be on delivering premium finishes and high quality.

Housing designed for in-situ concrete can deliver excellent results when used alongside smart project tools like GPS positioning to define where each enclosure should be placed. A recent example of this is the Kingsway data centre project in Swansea, where over 3,000 enclosures were set into in-situ concrete to provide high levels of protection for electrical devices as well as the excellent finish required for a high-tech data centre housing blue-chip companies.

The key issues for those responsible for procurement revolve around understanding the demands of each installation. Installers need appropriate access, connection space, fixing methods and provision for terminals to connect and maintain equipment efficiently. In both prefabricated and cast-in-place concrete construction, the installation sequence adds another challenge: teams must position and secure housings for components before casting in such a way as to maintain their stability during the process.

Designing for second and third life phases

The challenge specifiers face becomes even clearer when buildings enter subsequent phases of use. Lighting, safety and communication technologies continue to evolve, but retrofit projects are necessarily constrained by the existing structures they involve, which will often have been designed with different use cases and regulations in mind. They present unique access issues and may require updating to meet current regulatory requirements. These can vary significantly, affecting everything from luminaire selection, testing, installation methods to the evidence needed for certification.

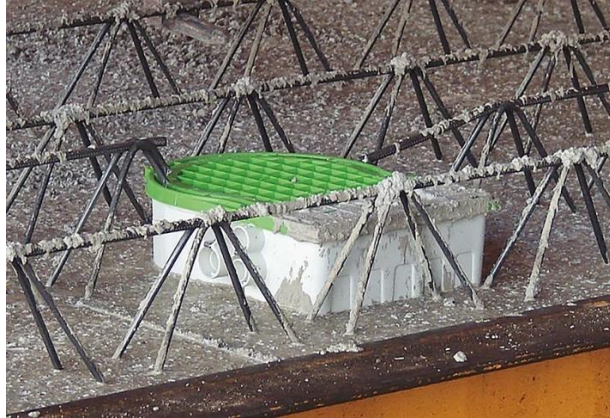
Retrofit projects ask specifiers to assess the individual needs of each installation. There will always be movement when it comes to regulation and technological improvements, so the most successful retrofit and refurbishment projects are likely to anticipate future intervention and allow some scope for change where this is possible.

From residential developments to data centres and beyond, concrete construction offers a practical route to faster, more cost-effective electrical enclosure installation. The integration of electrical and communications infrastructure into walls and ceilings offers a solution that can save time and space while simplifying installation. For the UK market, tailored concrete enclosure systems can deliver reliable performance and efficiency.

Image captions:



Image 1: Spelsberg IBT range offers robust solutions for electrical installations in a variety of buildings and structures.



Images 2 & 3: Spelsberg IBT enclosures are suitable for installation in in-place concrete and prefabricated elements.

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About Spelsberg

Spelsberg is one of the largest manufacturers of electrical enclosures in the world. With over 4,000 enclosures available as standard and further customisation possible, it offers solutions for almost any application.

With the largest supply of non-metallic enclosures, ex-stock in the UK, its products are often available for delivery within 24 hours; customisation is possible on any product, including bespoke entries, engraved corporate logos or fitted terminals, within 48 hours. Products can be ordered direct from Spelsberg or from most leading supply specialists including RS, Rapid, Farnell and CPC.

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