



TIMBER CONSTRUCTION: THE TIMBER FRAME COMPANY



LEADING THE WAY IN MODERN BUILDING TECHNOLOGY

Market leader in sustainable manufactured off-site housing

“This is the cutting edge of timber frame technology,” says Leigh Porter, Sales and Marketing Manager, at The Timber Frame Company (TTFC). The company’s revolutionary new Synergy Home closed panel timber frame building system really is ahead of the game. Indeed, as Leigh tells *Building Design and Construction*, “we have no competitors”.

TTFC is the only company to offer a comprehensive fully designed and built closed panel wall system in which windows, insulation, air tight membrane, high density plasterboard and electrical conduits are all factory-installed then delivered to site and erected as a complete wall panel ready to plaster.

Highlighting the quality of TTFC’s system is its award from Isover in 2011 when it received the cer-

tificate for “One of the most outstanding Energy Efficient Construction Projects in Europe”. Indeed, the company is the market leader in sustainable manufactured off-site housing in the UK. Synergy Home closed panel system gives the client a wind and watertight house within the space of a couple of weeks. It provides a high quality finish and excellent air tightness that is more easily achieved within a dry, factory-controlled environment.

The process eliminates the requirement for many other sub-contractors, improving quality through tightly controlled factory standards. It also increases the speed of the building process, both factors not available through any other method of building.

“I would describe the system as the next development on from SIPS,” says Leigh. “It was devel-

oped through looking at the whole process and devising a better way of delivering a more finished product. Taking installation to site in some sort of finished format is a good idea but we took this one stage further and can do the whole wall, engineered to complete the building.

“It is the real cutting edge of timber frame, and while other companies are developing similar systems we don’t feel anyone is doing it to the extent we are. And, unlike us, those companies new to the technology don’t have the six years of experience we have. Therefore, we are the most experienced company at this end of the industry.”

Certainly, that experience has aided the company throughout the recession where, following a move from Ireland to England, it has seen growth





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The Synergy Home closed panel system comprises a number of components pre-installed, which are completed within the factory and then delivered to site and quickly erected. These components include the timber frame wall panel, insulation, windows and doors, gypsum Rigidur board (very high density plasterboard), vapour barrier (to ensure air tightness), electrical ducting, sockets and switch cut outs. The outside of the Synergy Home can be finished as the client desires with traditional block/render finish, cementation board factory-fitted ready for render, stone or timber cladding.

Stewart Mason, TTFC managing director, says, "We work with a vast range of suppliers which enables us to tailor our product to meet our clients' individual requirements. The client is able to choose windows from several of the country's leading window manufacturers, they are then delivered to our factory to be installed into the wall panels prior to delivery to site. This enables us to fit and seal the windows which is imperative in achieving good air tightness. The wall thicknesses and insulation prop-

erties can be varied to achieve an A rated U-Value of 0.18 W/m²K as standard and as low as 0.11 W/m²K if desired.

"The feedback we have received from our customers tells us that they love the ease with which everything comes together on site with minimal mess and one point of contact instead of trying to manage numerous subcontractors and large volumes of on site waste and damaged materials."

Key to TTFC's success thus far is its vast experience. Other companies are looking at similar systems but none have six years of on-the-ground knowledge working with them. Offering a completely bespoke method also makes the Synergy Home closed panel timber frame much more attractive to potential customers. Along with its inherent quality and environmental benefits, it is, perhaps most crucially, very flexible in its adaptation and very quick to construct on site.

"With our experience it puts us ahead of the competition," acknowledges Leigh. "As other companies begin to see the benefits and launch their

year on year. TTFC business is split equally between commercial projects (schools, care homes, apartment blocks, etc.) and the domestic home market having engineered whole house systems for a variety of types from contemporary to traditional styles, from detached homes to penthouse suites on tower blocks, to those with stone or brick finishes, thatched roofs or green roofs. Indeed, timber frame provides such a flexible building method it is perhaps surprising to see its adaptation in the UK so far behind the rest of Europe.

"This country is so behind the times when it comes to timber," agrees Leigh. "Once companies begin to understand the technology and see the benefits of timber frame it will change the face of construction in the UK."



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own systems, we have that head start that potential clients can see. The award last year was great because it gave us a stamp of approval that highlights our experience and our ability to produce the highest quality. I never wouldn't merit us with such a prestigious award, across not only the UK but Europe wide, without the credentials and finished work to back it up."

SAFER CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

Recently, TTFC's specialist work was seen on a six-storey tower block in London. Here it was adding three penthouses to an existing block of flats. When you consider the logistics of completing such renovation at significant height using conventional building methods, it becomes a lengthy and costly task. However, TTFC were able to deliver essentially whole wall sections with windows, doors and the internal finish all factory-fitted, allowing for not only a safer construction process but also one that was more quickly put into place with less disturbance to the residents.

Leigh notes that TTFC have a number of enquiries for similar projects, particularly in city centre areas, or those near shopping districts or busy streets where construction work can otherwise cause disruption.

With its industry-leading approach it is little surprise to see TTFC making great strides in construction. Establishing a range of clients and long-term relationships in many sectors including small and large housing developments to hotels and hospitals, it has exhibited the flexibility and quality of its products across both the UK and Ireland.

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