



Award Category: Outstanding Commitment to Adapt to a Changing Climate

Project: The Wine Society Warehouse, Stevenage

Client: The Wine Society

Architect: Vincent and Gorbing Associates



The design of this warehouse responds to the requirement for minimal heating and cooling equipment with the resultant reduction in energy consumption. This is principally achieved by the use of the exterior wall cladding material Hemcrete, which offers excellent insulation properties and maintains a stable internal air temperature throughout hot summers and cold winters. The storage of large volumes of wine (liquid) at a low temperature provides an excellent source of thermal mass which contributes to the steady-state environment.

This warehouse is the first building of its type in the UK to use off site construction techniques involving pre-formed wall panels and the energy saving material Hemcrete. Hemcrete is a mixture of hemp stalk and modified lime. It is a new product and can reverse the damaging effects of greenhouse gases by locking up harmful CO₂ emissions within wall construction. The hemp is grown and harvested in the UK.

The steel truss framed building provides structural support for the large prefabricated Hemcrete panels. The distribution warehouse is naturally lit by the use of Kalwall, a glass fibre insulating panel which offers up to 50% light transmission. The combination of internal Hemcrete wall panels, exterior composite panels, Kalwall and a highly insulated roofing system provides an insulated internal space which exceeds current Building Regulations.

Judges comments:

“This building is a trailblazer - Hemcrete is a product that will take on ever-increasing importance over the coming years if we are to hit the carbon reduction standards set by the government.”