



Award Category: Most Sustainable Construction sponsored by The Green Triangle

Project: The Warren – headquarters for Earthworks St Albans St Albans

Client: Earthworks Charity

Architect: Ecovril Ltd



The Warren is a new multi-functional off-grid headquarters for the Earthworks St Albans horticultural charity that works with adult trainees with learning difficulties and mental health problems. The scheme replaces an earlier structure that was destroyed by fire.

The building is constructed from sustainably sourced English Oak and insulated with sheep's wool. The use of natural materials complements the garden setting where the Earthworks trainees carry out horticultural activities. The building is fully equipped with solar PV powered LED lighting, solar thermal hot water and a wood burning stove.

There is a flexible kitchen space, tea/rest area, meeting area and sheltered external space. Two pairs of double doors enable easy access through the building to the garden areas for disabled access during gardening activities in the summer months.

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The building is part of the working garden, functioning as a secure store as well as a place of rest, warmth and shelter.

Judges comments:

“The judges were immensely impressed with this extraordinary and holistic project. It rose like a phoenix from the ashes of a previous facility that burnt down. It displays the triple bottom line of sustainability to the full. Environmentally, it is an example of appropriate technology that uses recycled, reclaimed and donated components and materials. It is completely off-grid and composting lavatories were already on the site. Socially, it serves an important purpose and has allowed the charity to continue its excellent work. All of this was achieved on a very modest budget, which makes it great value for money all round.”