



Crome Court, University of East Anglia

Photo: Stora Enso

New CLT student accommodation is the Jewel in the Crown at University of East Anglia

Crome Court, a new 232 room 5-7 storey student accommodation building on the campus of University of East Anglia has recently been completed using Stora Enso PEFC certified Cross Laminated Timber for the superstructure. The new residence, which achieved BREEAM Excellent, is described by the University as the 'jewel in the crown' of its student accommodation and is widely acknowledged as an exemplar of BIM in the UK having recently won a national Construction Computing Award.

The new building, which has also been shortlisted for the RICS Awards, is designed by LSI Architects and constructed by Kier with timber engineering and installation by Eurban. CLT was specified for a combination of reasons: in addition to its sustainability benefits, CLT's suitability for building on a small site with existing residential buildings in use during construction was a key factor. CLT is a quiet method of construction and the University received only one complaint in more than 64 weeks of construction.

The programme was extremely challenging and CLT's speed and ease of construction was also a major consideration - building with CLT enabled the project to be delivered within a very tight 26 month programme, from initial briefing to turnkey

handover to meet the start of a new academic year.

This timing was crucial as Senior Estates Project Manager, Martin Lovatt explains "We had 232 students waiting to take up residence. If the building hadn't been ready we would have had to find accommodation for them within the city which would have cost us a lot of money and a loss of reputation, so it was high stakes."

Crome Court was actually completed 4 weeks ahead of schedule. Mr Lovatt continues "The quality and the cost of the building is exceptional - we had a £12m project budget to start with and the project was brought in £900,000 under budget at £11.1m - so a good story all around."

UEA has a 25 year masterplan of construction works and aims to grow in student numbers by 6.7% in the next 4 years. This measure of growth needs additional accommodation and Crome Court is an important part of its delivery.

The project is the first on the UEA's estate to implement BIM Level 2 which it has delivered two years ahead of the Government schedule for Level 2 delivery.



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The project has a specific focus on delivering a complete 6D Asset Information Model and its collaborative use by the project team enabled a rapid design programme with minimal errors. The CLT data supplied by Eurban was checked using modelling checking software rather than drawings, comparing the structural engineers and architects modelled information. As part of delivering BIM Level 2, the project has also delivered an asset information model for facilities management. Martin Lovatt describes himself as the University Estates 'BIM champion' and keeps it high on the agenda. "A lot of people pay BIM lip service and just use it for 3D modelling, but it's a lot more than that." He comments. "It's really a platform allowing people to collaborate - not so much a design tool, though that's at the heart of it, but a management tool for transferring and communicating ideas and data. It is the future."

The UEA campus is well established with a renowned architectural heritage - it is home to Denys Lasdun's famous Grade 2 Listed Brutalist Ziggurat buildings and Norman Foster's Sainsbury's Building which houses the vast Sainsbury's Collection - Crome Court provides a distinctive and attractive addition to the campus living experience for students.

The residences are set out on an 'apartment' arrangement with 8 to 10 en-suite rooms per apartment and a shared kitchen. Individual energy and water usage is monitored to encourage competition between students. The Kitchen and dining rooms are arranged with feature windows that look out to the surrounding landscape. The upper storey bedrooms enjoy long distance views from enlarged full height windows that incorporate distinctive, specially designed, coloured glass fins providing solar shading. There is also a 50m² communal space on the ground floor which can be booked for events and social occasions.

Wayne Probert, Sales and Marketing, Stora Enso Building Solutions comments "This is a fantastic building in keeping with the University's world renowned reputation as a heritage architecture site. It has broken new ground in terms of BIM and we're very excited to have played our part in this achievement".

Crome Court is also a very efficient use of space and beats the Gross Internal Area (GIA) benchmark for student

accommodation of 27 m² per room coming in at 25m². This is partly due to the specification of a fire engineered solution that includes active smoke venting to circulation areas resulting in a reduction in the required number of lifts.

The building also exceeds building regulations for acoustic separation by 3 db which has helped to gain extra BREEAM points.

Externally a striking green wall designed by landscape architects, Wynne Williams, is featured on the south corner of the building to replace planting that was removed to enable the scheme to be built, and to express the UEA's environmental ambitions.

Stora Enso Wood Products
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Stora Enso's CLT (Cross Laminated Timber) is a solid wood construction product consisting of at least three bonded single-layer panels arranged at right angles to each other. From five layers, CLT can also include middle layers (transverse layers) without narrow side bonding. It currently measures up to 2.95 × 16m. CLT solid wood panels are made up of several layers and are available in different panel thicknesses depending on structural requirements.