



## Case study – ‘The Cube Project’ at the University of Hertfordshire



(Photography credit to Allan MacDonald)

### Vincent Timber provides cladding solution for the Cube

**Sustainability was at the top of the agenda for an experimental construction initiative, ‘The Cube Project’ at the University of Hertfordshire. To create a high performance, thermally-efficient building envelope, Vincent Timber fitted the bill perfectly with its eco-friendly English Sweet Chestnut cladding.**

The Cube Project aims to show how one person can live in a compact home – with an interior no larger than 27m<sup>3</sup> – that is designed to generate as much energy as it uses. The Cube, conceived, designed and managed by Dr Mike Page, engineer and Reader in Cognitive Psychology at the University’s School of Psychology, shows how environmentally-friendly construction can be achieved in a practical way.

To demonstrate this, a range of sustainable technologies was incorporated into the Cube’s construction. It was fitted with solar photovoltaic panels, an air source heat pump, triple-glazed windows, high performance insulation, low-energy appliances and a composting toilet, as well as being externally clad with approximately 40m<sup>2</sup> of FSC®-certified English Sweet Chestnut from Vincent Timber.

With a light golden appearance similar to Oak, Sweet Chestnut is highly durable and 20% lighter in weight than Oak. Its long term performance abilities mean that the cladding will stand the test of time, whilst its FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council) certification shows it is sustainably sourced.

Sweet Chestnut is actually one of the most sustainable trees common to the UK. It has a far quicker growth cycle than Oak, with its trees harvested within twenty to twenty five years, compared to its more traditional counterpart that can take up to 100 years to reach harvestable age.

In addition to its natural beauty, English Sweet Chestnut has impressive thermal insulation properties – ideal for structures where there is a specific requirement to keep energy consumption to a minimum. Specified for its longevity and low maintenance credentials, the natural aesthetic provided by English Sweet Chestnut will age to a distinctive silvery grey.

The Cube Project ([www.cubeproject.org.uk](http://www.cubeproject.org.uk)) is set to play an important role in the demonstration of how energy saving, low-carbon technologies can help to deliver entirely self-sufficient homes. Designed to be transportable, it can be taken all over the country and beyond to promote the benefits and feasibility of pro-environmental construction.

#### Project:

‘The Cube Project’ at the University of Hertfordshire

#### Products:

Eco-friendly English Sweet Chestnut cladding.

