

Independent  
building control

Wolseley opens showcase to  
boost sustainable construction  
industry in the UK

Wolseley, the leading distributor of construction materials, has opened a national showcase for sustainable building products and construction methods, which aims to accelerate the UK's move to sustainable construction.



The 6,800 sq ft Sustainable Building Center, built at a cost of £3.2 million, is the first building of its kind in the UK, providing a living, interactive centre for decision-makers throughout the construction industry.

The unique building, at Wolseley UK's 18-acre site at Leamington Spa in Warwickshire, will help make sustainable building a reality.

For the first time it brings together information about 7,000 sustainable products that are available now, through Wolseley's 1,800 branch network of brands such as Build Center and Plumb Centre.

Approved design Consultancy were pleased to act as the Building Control Body on this project to help facilitate the exciting design standards developed both in concept and detail by the Architects ECD.

Approved Design have now worked on several award winning sustainable buildings including both the Wolseley Sustainable Center. The £40 million Colmore Plaza City Centre development in Birmingham which includes cutting edge modern design to provide a highly energy efficient building has just been completed along with the superb "Pineham" distribution center.

The latter is a showcase building and has allowed Approved Design to achieve "Planet Positive" accreditation which is a guarantee that by using Approved Design you are "greening" your supply chain with a competent professional company that makes a real and positive contribution to achieving sustainable construction.

The Center showcases a wide range of different types of product, many in their working environment, to provide visitors with hard data on the quantifiable benefits of the latest materials and construction methods. Renewable energy generators, such as solar panels, have been installed with a display showing the amount of power they are generating.

'Renewables' technology is just one feature on show. Real-world sustainable products have been incorporated into the building from below the ground to the roof: drainage, sub-structure, walls, roofs, finishes, floors, windows, heating and ventilation, lighting, bathrooms and landscaping.

Wolseley's specially trained staff are on hand to provide visitors with up-to-the-minute information, data and guidance on the most appropriate materials for specific projects, from single homes through to large-scale commercial developments.

The two-storey building also features a training and presentation theatre and café facilities for events, launches and demonstrations, to engage with a range of people from all sectors of the construction industry.

Nigel Sibley, Wolseley UK managing director, said: "Wolseley is committed to helping the industry reduce the environmental footprint left by developers and occupiers alike. Both regulation, such as Part L of the Building Regulations the Code for Sustainable Homes, and market forces are driving the construction industry to embrace sustainability.

"We have long been an advocate of sustainable building products and construction methods, working with leading architects, developers and contractors to encourage the specification and use of energy-efficient materials in all types of buildings.

"Wolseley has made a significant investment which reflects our belief that sustainable products will move from 'niche' to 'norm' in the construction industry. The opening of the Sustainable Building Center moves the eco-debate decisively forward, from talk to implementation."

The building itself features 170 types of products, including: photovoltaics; micro wind; sedum roof; e-glazing; natural lighting; natural insulation; green floor coverings; mini Combined Heat and Power (CHP); rainwater harvesting; biomass; ground source heat pump; engineered timber; low energy lighting; water saving devices; solar thermal; and sustainable drainage.

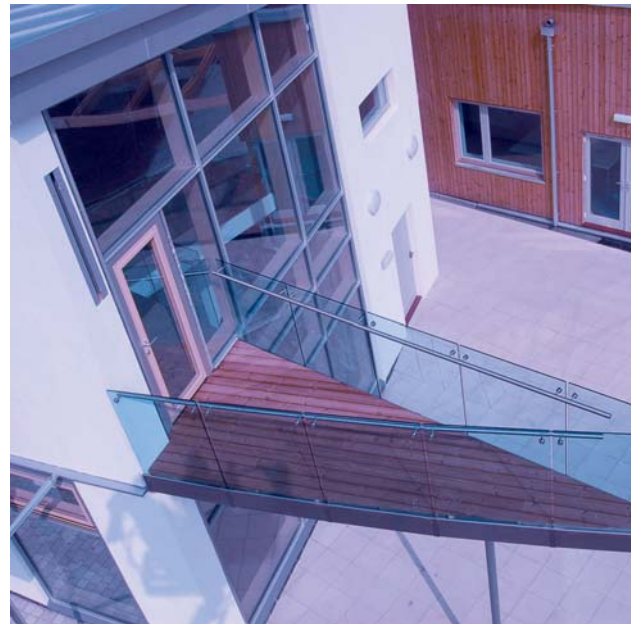
## Widespread interest

Officially opened by Wayne Hemingway, the founder of the Red or Dead fashion label but now as passionate about sustainable construction and eco-towns as he once was about frills and furbelows, the SBC has attracted widespread interest. 'Building' magazine, the UK's leading publication for construction professionals, dedicated three pages of a recent issue to an article that at times positively glowed like the brightest sun scoop in its praise for the project.

What is a sustainable building?

One that:

- leaves as small an environmental footprint as possible, is economic to run over its whole life cycle, and fits well with the needs of the local community.
- is energy and carbon efficient, designed to minimise energy consumption, with effective insulation and the most efficient heating or cooling systems and appliances.
- is built with good access to public transport in mind.
- is built with a minimum of waste in its construction and looks to maximise re-use of on-site materials such as waste soil.
- is designed and constructed to enable its occupants to use less water, through, for example, the installation of more efficient fittings and appliances.
- is designed to make recycling and composting easy for the occupants.



The team that delivered the building include: -

- **Wolseley Sustainable Building Center**

Wolseley UK has worked with the following, amongst others, on the Sustainable Building Center project:

- **Building Regulations – Approved Design Consultancy**
- **Architect – ECD Architects**
- **Project manager – Edmund Shipway**
- **Main contractor – SOL Construction**
- **Consulting engineer – Fulcrum Consulting**
- **Consulting structural engineer – Techniker**

## The right environment for business

Opened in June to industry acclaim, Wolseley UK's stunning new £3.2 million Sustainable Building Center does more than showcase the best in environmentally-friendly products. It is a valuable resource for customers – and the springboard for the company's success in an increasingly important sector.

For many years, it was considered to be little more than a fad; the concern of a handful of eco-warriors and, for companies such as Wolseley UK, a niche market at best. Now sustainability is a mainstream business issue and one that distributors of building materials ignore at their peril.

"We carried out a fundamental reading of the way in which the construction materials market was evolving," explains Nigel Sibley, Wolseley UK Managing Director. "There was clearly a major shift towards sustainable materials and customers knew the issues were huge. Climate change, Government legislation, changes in building regulations and demand from consumers all pointed to the need to use more sustainable products and technologies. The problem was that customers didn't know what products were available or where to get them. That seemed to us to be an enormous opportunity. We didn't want to merely stick a few green logos around the branches – we wanted to lead the market by providing unbiased, objective advice that would help our customers and their businesses seize this vast opportunity."



## A unique resource

The solution was the Sustainable Building Center (SBC), a £3.2 million investment unique in the UK. "Nobody else is approaching the sustainability issue in such a committed, innovative way," says Tim Pollard, Head of Sustainability at Wolseley UK. "Even before the opening we were cold-called by Marks & Spencer and Tesco, who had heard about the building and wanted to visit."

The key to the SBC's attraction is not just that it is a truly inspiring building. It is that every product on show is in use, doing the job it was created for, and also available from Wolseley locations.

Flooring made with linseed oil or recycled glass... insulation featuring sheep wool, hessian or clay... ceiling panels incorporating phase-changing polymer... 30m single span Glulam beams... a roof covered with sedum plants to absorb rainwater... these may sound futuristic, but they are in fact realistic and practical products available from Wolseley UK in commercial quantities and to commercial deadlines.

The SBC showcases many of Wolseley UK's 7,000 sustainable products across 13 areas: drainage and water conservation; sub structure; wall and floor construction; roofing; wall finishes; flooring; windows and doors; renewable technologies; heating and ventilation; lighting; bathrooms and toilets; miscellaneous; and timber.

"One of our major achievements has been to make the SBC a working building," adds Tim Pollard. "The photovoltaic panels, biomass boiler and ground source heat pump are all in operation and the floors, walls and ceilings feature cutaways so visitors can see the joists, insulation, pipework and so on and better appreciate how they work together."

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