

Going green

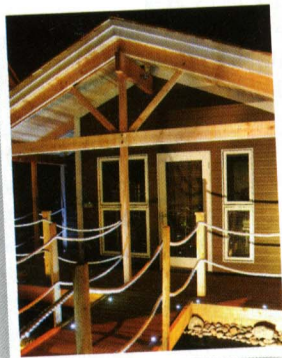
The eco shed

Is Garry Taylor's 'shed' a blueprint for more efficient homes of the future?

Garry Taylor is a chartered building surveyor who encourages sustainable and energy-efficient construction through his company, G J Taylor Consultancy. When he decided to build a multi-purpose building in the back garden of his Winchester home, then, it was the perfect opportunity to practice what he preached.

Garry explored several options, including traditional building and panel-framed systems, but in the end he opted for Super E, a building standard sponsored by the Canadian government that provides an umbrella brand for builders of high-efficiency homes.

The Super E method is what's described as, 'a whole-house approach, integrating the principles of reduced air leakage, increased insulation, and distributed mechanical ventilation.' What this amounts to, apparently, is the combination of the flexibility of bespoke design with well-insulated wall design and high-performance windows to create buildings that are individual in appearance, and efficient in their construction. A Super E building, we're told, can maintain a consistent indoor temperature, without any heating, for more than 15 hours in freezing conditions. That's not to say it's just an airtight box, though: using a fan-assisted heat exchanger provides, 'continuous whole-house ventilation'. It's further claimed that the Super E approach uses 'enviro-friendly'



Garry's shed proves that sustainable construction doesn't have to compromise on aesthetics

Super E buildings are individual in appearance, and efficient in their construction


resources, meaning that they're chosen for their reduced impact on the environment and efficient use of materials.

In practice, then, Garry simply designed the building he wanted, then sent the plans to his Super E-accredited providers in Canada where factors like lighting, heating, cooling, ventilation, and layout were planned in.

Once all the details had been ironed out, the building was dispatched from Canada, and was then assembled in just two weeks by Super E's own builders.

Garry is thrilled with what his family affectionately calls the Executive Shed, which provides an environmentally friendly, stylish place to work and relax. "In the current climate," says Garry, "it's increasingly important to use environmentally sound, energy efficient methods of construction. My shed proves that sustainable construction doesn't have to compromise on

aesthetics. Super E is very flexible; consequently the shed has a multi-purpose design, which means I can use this small, 23m³ space for a whole range of activities. The open-plan design provides a relaxing retreat away from the house, where I can sit on the sofa, watch TV and unwind. The *en suite* bathroom and separate entrance also make it a comfortable and private place for guests to stay as well.

Garry looks forward to building more Super E homes for his own clients. "The Canadians had a refreshing 'can-do' attitude that made them a pleasure to work with. Nothing was too much trouble: if I phoned them, they would instantly respond; if I asked a question, I got an answer; and if they gave me a delivery date they delivered on time. If I could afford a plot of land in the UK, I would without question use this method to build my new home." 

Sources

www.super-e.com