

MAKE IT **WOOD**

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PLANET ARK

CASE STUDY



# The Strange House Deptford, London, UK

New build private residential home  
Hugh Strange Architects  
[www.hughstrange.com](http://www.hughstrange.com)

## OVERVIEW

Strange House is small, relatively low-cost and sits within existing walls on a constrained site. It uses European softwood and crafted tropical hardwood. The building frame of solid cross-laminated timber panels was fabricated from FSC European Softwood (Spruce) in a Swiss factory, driven to site in a container and erected in a week. The windows, doors and internal fit-out and furniture of responsibly sourced tropical hardwood (largely Cedro Macho) were felled by hurricane Katrina in Central America, fabricated in a Nicaraguan workshop and arrived on site in a shipping container for simple site assembly. The house exudes creativity and warmth.



*'Off-site manufacture of the two timber packages comprising the majority of the building fabric resulted in reduced waste, better cost control and excellent quality of finish whilst the frame embodies 17 tonnes of stored CO<sub>2</sub>'*

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Every internal room has the same simple palette of materials: washed (Osmo Hard Wax Oil) timber walls and ceilings, concrete floors and bespoke joinery comprising hardwood windows, doors, fit-out and furniture. The constructional logic of the building's detailing marries simple site assembly by the main contractor with an engineered European product and highly crafted Central American joinery. Glass is sandwiched between the exposed structural timber and the hardwood frame to form the fixed windows, the top and bottom frames apparently invisible emphasising the vertical mullions. The internal hardwood doors and frames are face fixed to structural softwood openings, reducing site work, accommodating site tolerances and visually expressing the relationship between primary structural timber and secondary fit-out timber.



The kitchen (Guapinol), cupboards, seating, desk and shelving units are all bespoke units that sit within recesses formed in the structural frame, providing a warm habitability within the expressed structure of the house. The solidity of both timbers is expressed throughout; the edges of the softwood structural panels deliberately exposed to make evident their construction and each detail of the hardwood fit-out showing the thickness of the solid timbers used. The bed, chairs and a dining table made from a single piece of solid hardwood (Nanciton) are all provided by the same supplier, creating a completely integrated timber interior.

## DID YOU USE CERTIFIED WOOD?

Yes, Forest Stewardship Council certified wood was used throughout the project.

## DOES YOUR PROJECT HAVE ANY OTHER RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES?

The lightness of the building's solid timber panel structure allows a new concrete slab to form a raft foundation that sits on the existing site slab without the need of costly and wasteful excavations for foundations. Good air-tightness and thermal mass provided by the timber panel construction, together with high standards of insulation, minimal glazing to the north, lots of natural daylight and low energy fittings all reduce the building's energy requirements.

## WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LIKE ABOUT USING WOOD?

'The warmth of wood to touch and look at is something that can not be achieved by any other building material.'

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF USING WOOD?

Using wood as a building material provides environmental benefits as the wood stores carbon and has a low embodied energy. Wood also has aesthetic benefits.