

Habitat Warehouse, Office & Showroom Complex

ARCHITECTS

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STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

Ove Arup & Partners

STEELWORK CONTRACTOR

Tubeworkers Ltd

Judges Comments

A project for large scale commerce which is raised above the mundane solution by imaginative detailing of structural form and cladding.

Situated in Hithercroft Road, Wallingford, Berkshire, and opposite Habitat's existing premises, it provides a warehouse to serve Habitat shops, mail order packing and processing facilities, offices, a showroom and ancillary areas along with car parking for staff and visitors and a truck compound. The design team were asked to take into account that the building was likely to require substantial changes over time.

The complex is divided into two sections:

(a) The 5,574 sq.m warehouse which includes packing, goods in and out areas, staff facilities, security and reception on ground floor, plus a 929 sq.m gallery and mezzanine of office space.

(b) A 929 sq.m retail showroom linked to the warehouse by a single-storey service passage.

The warehouse has four 'Nodus' tubular steel space frame roof units spanning 36m x 30m supported along their internal sides by four box-shaped trusses. The trusses span from paired columns in the middle of each of the faces of the building to a cluster of four linked concrete columns located in the centre of the warehouse. Around the perimeter of the building the space frames are supported on 300mm square precast columns.

The sheeting rails are 150mm square hollow sections bolted to the external faces of the columns.

The showroom has a single 30m x 30m 'Nodus' space frame supported along its sides by precast columns.

The walls are asbestos sheets laid with the corrugations running horizontal, painted green on the warehouse and white on the showroom. The sheets are fixed to soft wood timber runners supported by the 150mm square hollow steel sections.

The roof is 3 layers of fibre glass-based roofing felt with chippings on 25mm thick cork insulation with a vapour barrier and supported by corrugated metal decking.

