

# Wolseley's exciting new centre woos the building trade

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The Wolseley Sustainable Building Center, at Leamington Spa in Warwickshire, aims to accelerate the UK building industry's move to embrace sustainable construction.

Built at a cost of £3.2 million, the 6,800 sq ft Sustainable Building Center is a living, interactive centre for decision-makers throughout the construction industry.

The unique new building will help make sustainable building a reality. It will enable all involved in construction - from architects through to jobbing builders - to experience the latest technologies and the widest range of sustainable, energy-efficient and recycled building products. For the first time it brings together information about 7,000 sustainable products that are available now, through Wolseley's 1,800 branch network.

The Sustainable Building Center is already attracting great interest from some of the UK's leading developers and property companies engaged in major building programmes. Even before its official opening, more than 100 visits to the Center had been scheduled by customers and other interested groups, including Marks and Spencer and Tesco.

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.

Everything that can be seen at the SBC can be bought, from the fired clay blocks and Thermowood cladding to the LED uplighters, guttering and downpipes.

Architect Peter Caplehorn, who is technical director of Scott Brownrigg, spends much of his time looking into new products, understanding how they work and analysing the manufacturers' claims. Writing in 'Building' magazine, after a visit to the SBC, he said:

"It would have been easy to create a patchwork building with no integrity, or something that included the bells and whistles but has no real focus. As it is they have achieved a good balance. The building has a nice character, which introduces you in a gentle manner to the technologies that are available. It's also a functional building, a good place for demos and a good focus for people to talk about sustainability."

"Normally when I'm looking at a product I'll assess it to make sure that it does what it says it will and also check out the track record of the manufacturer and supplier. In a way they have cut out that step. It's also very rare that you get the opportunity to compare similar products all on the same site, so from that point of view it's fantastically powerful."

A video about the SBC can be seen below in flash movie format - click on the arrow to begin. More images of the SBC can be seen at Wolseley's **[purpose-built SBC website](#)**

The Sustainable Building Center is featured in the latest issue of Wolseley's magazine Directions. The article is republished here as a .pdf download. Please follow the link at the bottom of the page.

**Available documents:** (available for download)

- **Sustainable building center**