

# WINNER

PRIVATE / BEST SMALL PROJECT  
STRANGE HOUSE



**T**he 75sq m new-build house in south-east London is small, relatively low-cost and sits on a constrained site, but aspires to create a generous architecture inspired by the considered use of engineered European softwood and crafted tropical hardwood.

The building frame of solid timber engineered panels was fabricated from FSC European spruce softwood in a Swiss factory, driven to site in a container and erected in a week. The windows, doors and internal fit-out and furniture were made of responsibly sourced tropical hardwood (largely cedro macho) which was felled by a hurricane in Central America, fabricated in a Nicaraguan workshop and shipped over in a container for simple site assembly.

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 excavations. Good airtightness 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. Off-site manufacture of the two timber packages, comprising the majority of

**LOCATION** Deptford, south-east London

**BUILDING OWNERS** Hugh Strange and Adriana Ferlauto

**ARCHITECT** Hugh Strange Architects

**BUILDER / MAIN CONTRACTOR** Solmaz Ltd

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER** Price & Myers

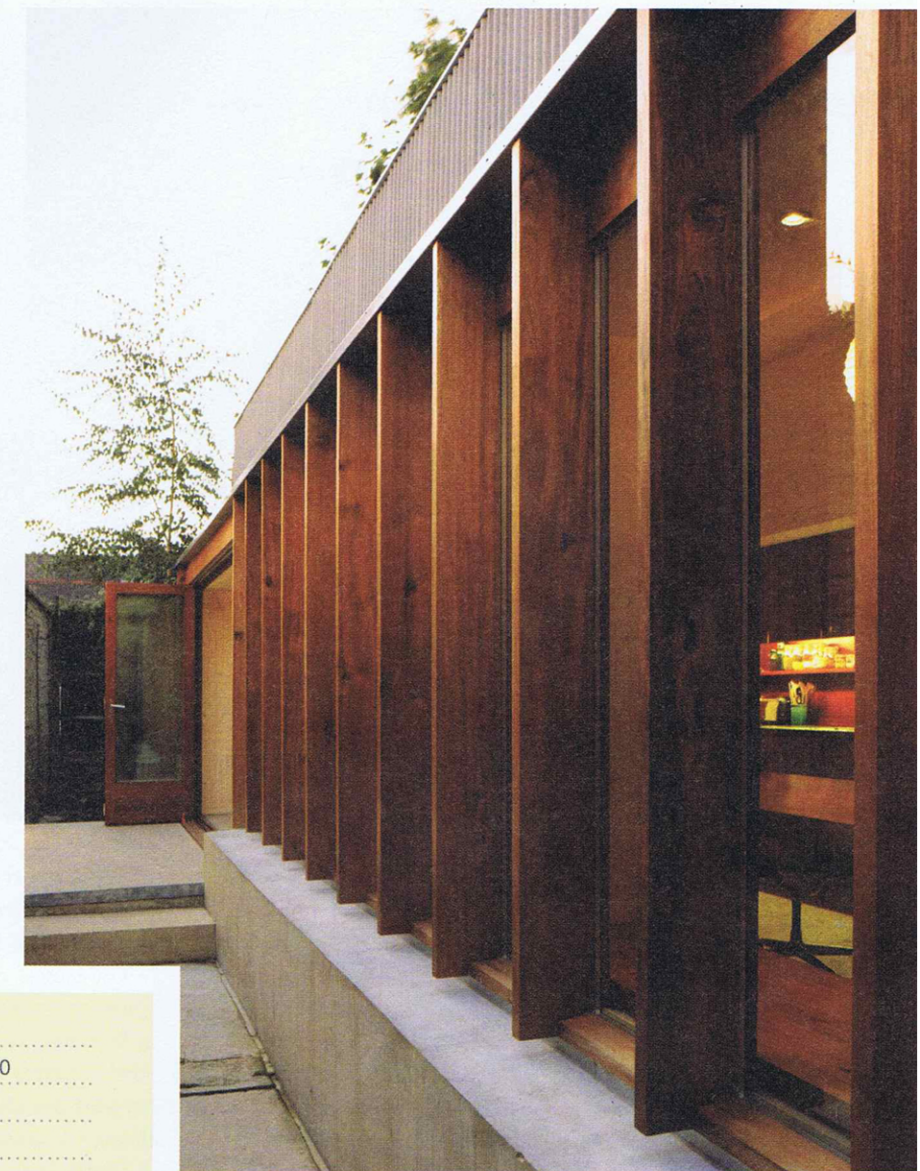
**JOINERY** Simplemente Madera

**WOOD SUPPLIER** Eurban Ltd

**WOOD SPECIES USED** Spruce (Switzerland), cedro macho (Nicaragua), guapinol (Nicaragua), nanciton (Nicaragua)

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>.

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 guapinol kitchen units are all bespoke and sit within recesses formed in the structural frame.

The solidity of both timbers is expressed throughout; the edges of the softwood structural panels are deliberately exposed to make evident their construction and each detail of the hardwood fit-out shows the thickness of the solid timbers used.

The judges said: "The cross-laminated timber panels double as structure and finish. The solid Nicaraguan hardwood joinery provides a fine contrast to the white-stained CLT panels.

"This shows what can be achieved by intelligent design with a small site and a modest budget."

**Above:** Looking down the south elevation towards the raised entrance.

**Left:** The bespoke kitchen units are made from tropical hardwood guapinol.