

CASE STUDY 04

using more wood in and from the south west

The National Maritime Museum, Cornwall

Standing on Falmouth's harbourside, this landmark award-winning building by Long & Kentish houses over 120 small craft and the Cornish maritime collection. The new building, commissioned following a design competition in 1996 is designed to last a century or more with little maintenance. As well as using traditional granite and slate, the building's cladding is in green oak boarding. This will weather from glowing gold to soft silver.

The oak was supplied by Atkins and Cripps Ltd, and sourced primarily from Wiltshire and Hertfordshire and sawn in local sawmills. Green oak describes the unseasoned nature of the wood, not its colour, and in an exposed site open to all weather conditions, kiln dried timber would have been inappropriate. The trees were felled in winter, when moisture content is at its lowest, making machining easier. Using green timber also saves on energy costs of kiln drying. The oak was thicker than normal, to resist weathering and to guarantee a 100 year life. No finish or stain has been used, again reducing environmental impacts, and should a section be damaged a replacement can easily be used, weathering down to the same colour within months. Over 43 km of oak planking was used equivalent to about 200 cubic metres, saving 160 tonnes of CO₂ compared to other materials.

The cladding has generated many enquiries for Atkins and Cripps and they recognise that demand for timber in buildings is increasing steadily, recognising the aesthetic and environmental credentials of wood.



Above: View of the Museum from the water © NMMC

Below: Tidal zone roofing © BOB BERRY

