

Hooke Park

Location: Dorset, UK

Client: John Makepiece

Dates of Involvement: 1994 - 1997

A series of **experimental timber structures** exploring different ways of using forest thinnings.

Hooke Park (now owned by the Architectural Association) was set up by the Parnham Trust to create a working demonstration of how a sustainable living and working community could be established in the countryside.

A range of buildings were designed that explored different aspects of timber technology in order to investigate how timber, in particular the local forest thinnings, could be better utilized.

The first phase, by Frei Otto, ABK and Buro Happold, saw the construction of a large workshop and a house. We then designed and obtained planning permission for five additional houses.

These houses would each serve a different social purpose in rural and urban situations: three for students, one for a tutor and family and one for visitors.

The five houses, although different from each other, were composed as a coherent group, with a study centre, all linked by a covered way.

Westminster Lodge was the first of these five houses to be built with eight student study bedrooms arranged around a communal space – suitable for seminars and other meetings.



Creativity

The material used to build Westminster Lodge originates from the normal process of managing a forest plantation, where only a small number of saplings can mature into full-grown trees. The rest must be thinned out to allow room for the others to grow. As well as being burned as fuel they can be used to make buildings.

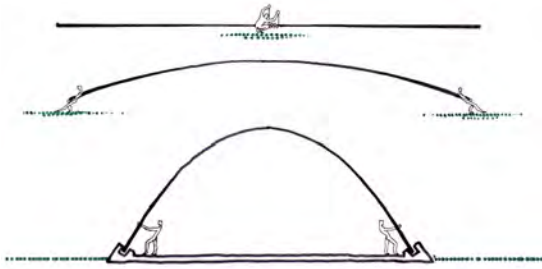
One of the key principles adopted at Hooke Park was to use the greenwood in its roundwood form, without losing their strength through planing.

The roof of Westminster Lodge is formed from a bent lattice of roundwood thinnings laid over a supporting structure made of rammed earth walls and timber posts. The roof was finished with a grass covering.

The timber roof joints were designed with BuroHappold and developed and tested at Bath University with funding from a Department of Education research grant.



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Above: A lattice of roundwood thinnings forming the Westminster Lodge is bent into shape.



Above and right: Eight private study bedrooms in Westminster Lodge are gathered around a common room with cooking facilities

