

# RMC International HQ

**Location:** Thorpe, Surrey, UK

**Client:** Ready Mix Concrete (Cemex)

**Dates of involvement:** 1986 - 1990

**Size:** 6,000sqm

**Awards:**

- Green Building of the Year Award Commendation
- Financial Times Architecture at Work Award
- RIBA National Award
- Civic Trust Award (inc. Steetley Special Award)
- Grade 2\* Listed

**In 1986 Ready Mixed Concrete Ltd decided to build a new international HQ and training facility on its land near Thorpe in Surrey. However, creating such a large building in green belt land was a huge challenge.**

There were three existing buildings on the site, 18C Eastley End House, its adjacent stable block, and some distance away The Grange, an Arts and Crafts house. By disguising the largely single storey accommodation as a garden behind a red brick perimeter wall and laying out a real garden over both the roofs and the courtyards, we succeeded in winning planning approval on appeal.

This building is at once audacious, fantastical and extremely rational. Whilst accepting the corporate hierarchies in the brief, the building successfully challenged workplace norms.

Each of the historic buildings is given an individual courtyard setting, with the new offices forming the physical enclosure to each court. This means that all the work areas open directly through full height doors onto the courtyard gardens – making a wonderful work environment. From here, stairs lead up to the roof which itself is a continuous garden, bounded by yew hedges in containers that provide sun-shading to the spaces below. Roof top ventilators to the kitchens and labs are dressed as giant chess pieces in a nod to Lewis Carroll.

The super insulated heavy weight construction with largely natural ventilation made the building an early sustainable exemplar.

