

How much energy goes into a building before it's even designed?

In calculating a building's environmental impact, it's easy to overlook the most basic costs. How much energy was used to make its steel, concrete, aluminium or PVC-U? How much CO₂ was produced? What quantity of water was used and needed recycling? Which toxins, in what amounts, were released to the environment? Spare yourself the headache and the maths by specifying timber. It acts as a carbon sink while growing and as a carbon store during its entire life in a building. At the end of its life it can be recycled or used for biomass energy. Experts estimate that every cubic metre of wood used instead of other building materials saves 0.8 tonne of CO₂ from polluting the atmosphere. Best of all, in Europe, wood is a renewable resource. The more we use, the more we plant. Which is why Europe's forests are expanding each year by an area the size of Cyprus.

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