



Case Study

Treetops Hospice, Risley



Case Study

Project Name

Treetops Hospice

Location

Risley, Derbyshire

Project Type

Commercial

Materials

Timber Frame

Year

2023





The Project

Lowfield Timber Frames has donated its specialist timber frame design and manufacturing expertise to a “DIY SOS Big Build” project in Risley, Derby for a special 10th-anniversary Children in Need episode.

The kit was manufactured at our factory on the Shropshire/ Mid Wales border with the pre-insulated panels and roof cassettes erected on site in just 3 days, creating the external structure for a bespoke children’s counselling and therapy centre at Treetops Hospice.

The centre will hugely benefit bereaved children and their families across Derbyshire. Treetops works primarily with young people who are experiencing traumatic grief. The support they receive is invaluable, life-changing and helps them work through their grief. Improving mental health and wellbeing, Treetops is recognised as a centre of excellence for children’s counselling.

It was truly humbling to be part of a programme that successfully unites, inspires, and motivates hundreds of volunteers to do good.

Lowfield loved being part of DIY SOS The Big Build. In addition to the transformational and moving impact for families going through a difficult time, the opportunity to make a difference also had a profound effect on the Lowfield Timber Frames team. It was remarkable to see the positive impact the building will have on the children at the centre for years to come.

The Details

4

Weeks from initial talks with BBC to commencement on site

3

Days on site erecting the timber frame kit

183 m²

Size of building

140 mm

Timber frame kit, achieving a U-value of 0.15W/m²K



How we got involved

We heard an appeal that the DIY SOS team were desperately looking for a timber frame company to come on board for the Children in Need episode to help create a dedicated children's bereavement centre in Derbyshire.

Initial discussions were had with the DIY SOS Assistant Producer to better understand what was required and we were put in contact with the lead Architect. It was clear from the outset that time was of the essence and it was going to need a huge amount of effort from the whole design team if the building was to be delivered on time.

We received the preliminary drawings within hours of making first contact and a costing exercise was carried out to establish the scope of the project. Whilst we were committed to providing our expertise for the design and manufacture, it was clear we were going to need additional support from our supply chain to make it happen. After a couple of phone calls, it was all systems go and we threw ourselves into the project.

This required exceptional coordination between Lowfields and our design team, whilst issuing information for approval to two independent Project Architects, a Principal Engineer, the Client (Treetops) and the entire BBC Team. A project of this nature would normally take at least 12 weeks to undergo the design and engineering process. It wasn't an overly complicated build, but it was the speed at which everything had to happen, whilst under the BBC spotlight, that was the pressure.



Scope of Services

The team opted for a 140mm pre-insulated kit which achieved a U-value of 0.15W/m²K, which is far better than building regulation requirements. One challenge to overcome was that site access was extremely tight, but we managed to deliver the kit on rigid lorries resolving the issue.

Whilst we started on site on the 4th of September, the absolute deadline for completion was the following week; the 11th of September, when 200+ volunteers would be arriving, along with the camera crew to carry out the 'fit out'.

Kevan Hurst, Construction Manager at Lowfields explained:

“We were on site a week before the scheduled 10-day build meaning the structure was water-tight within days, without the drying out period which is usually required when using traditional building methods. We were given a week to erect the kit but it only took us 3 days, the excellent weather helped but the kit was a credit to all involved.”

To erect the scheme in such a small window and ensure we did not over-run, we capitalised on off-site manufacture, prefabricating not just all the wall panels, but including the roof cassettes and even suspended ceiling cassettes. This enabled an erect window of 2 – 3 days, allowing a couple of days at the end of the week to snag and address any unforeseen problems, of which there weren't any.





Outcome

Lowfields loved working with the Treetops staff, they were all so appreciative of what we were doing for them. We don't normally get so much praise for our work as it is often seen as the hidden element of a build.

Our advice to anyone wanting to take on a challenge like this is to expect last-minute changes but it is the most rewarding project you will work on and to meet all the young people whose lives you are changing is truly remarkable and a feeling that will stay with you for a very long time.

Darren Jarman, Managing Director at Lowfield Timber Frames commented:

"We have supported many community projects in the past, but nothing on this scale. We obviously only played a small part in making this happen, but the stories we have heard about the difference it's going to make to the team at Treetops and the amazing people they are going to support has been truly overwhelming.

For 2 weeks, it just becomes a surreal experience. You walk onto site and get chatting to Nick Knowles and the rest of the team. Gaby is introducing you to Zoe Ball. Chris, Billy, James and The Hod are orchestrating a hive of activity as TV cameras keep appearing around every corner. They are such a well-oiled team, and it was a pleasure to see how they all operate and just put you at ease.

Not only that, but it's also the first time, and probably the last, that we will hand over a timber frame kit and get invited to the grand opening two weeks later!"



Testimonials

Julie Heath

Chief Executive at Treetops Hospice

“Our heartfelt thanks go to DIY SOS, BBC Children in Need, and all the tradespeople and volunteers who helped build us this beautiful children’s counselling and therapy centre. Your support and kindness has been truly overwhelming and you have built a lasting legacy for local bereaved children and young people.

“It’s incredible to see what was achieved in such a short space of time and it’s really beyond anything we could have imagined. Everything from the décor to the furnishings is just beautiful and it fits perfectly into the landscape here on site in Risley.

“Thank you, everyone, for giving us the best birthday gift during our 40th anniversary year.”

Ian Hodgkinson

Main Contractor- Hodgkinson Builders

“Lowfield Timber Frames designed, supplied and erected the timber frame for DIY SOS BIG BUILD supporting Children in Need at Risley. Such contributions from companies like Lowfield is what makes these renovation projects a reality. By providing the necessary advice, materials, expert trades, they play an important role in improving the lives of families in need. Collaborative efforts like this demonstrate the positive impact that the business community can have on charitable initiatives, ultimately making a difference in the lives of those facing challenging circumstances.”







Case Study

Client

BBC DIY SOS

On Behalf of

Treetops Hospice

Contracts Manager

Ian Hodgkinson

Architect

Maber & Residential S72

Structural Engineer

Paramount





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