



Curtain Place. Photo: Will Pryce and Waugh Thistleton

structural elements could be delivered to site in just 23 truck loads. That compared to an estimated 200 for the equivalent building in reinforced concrete frame, adding up not only to a major logistical benefit but also a major relief to occupants of neighbouring buildings.

Interestingly, project architect Stephen Cherry of Horden Cherry Lee said that his profession is also increasingly aware that CLT minimises disturbance to local residents because it's quieter to build with than steel and concrete. Another major plus for urban construction.

Mr Cherry was additionally drawn to CLT by something it didn't do – constrain his design.

'Its flexibility and versatility enabled us to realise our concept without compromise,' he said. 'It demonstrated that an environmentally sound timber building doesn't have to look like the rough-hewn home of some hair-shirted eco warrior.'

### Curtain Place

Curtain Place is another new building underlining timber's city centre construction credentials. Designed by Waugh Thistleton, the practice behind London's nine-storey Murray Grove CLT tower, for a time the world's tallest residential wood building, it melds a three-storey steel-frame and CLT office development with a six-storey structural CLT apartment block. Again timber's combination of relative lightness and prefabrication pluses came into play in its specification. It is being

built at a rate of a floor a week in an area of Shoreditch still based on London's medieval street plan.

The flexibility of timber prefabrication meant the CLT wall and floor panels could be made compact-size by contractor B&K Timber Structures so that delivery trucks could easily navigate the narrow winding roads, and they could be erected by just a couple of cranes and a core engineering crew of five.

Timber's 'quietness' was also noted on the project. Sometime after it had started, the contractors alerted neighbours to the arrival of a crane. Several said they weren't even aware building was underway.

The construction profession is also clearly increasingly learning how well timber combines with other building materials, and are consequently pushing back the boundaries.

### LILAC

Take the LILAC sustainable residential development in Leeds built last year by ModCell, the firm co-founded by Craig White of architects White Design and chairman of Wood for Good. This is the first multiple housing project undertaken by the company, and features its prefabricated, glulam-framed rendered panels which are in-filled with 420mm of compacted straw. The finished homes and apartments boast low U-values and high air-tightness. Residents are consequently enjoying fuel bills 90% less than the Leeds city average for equivalent housing.