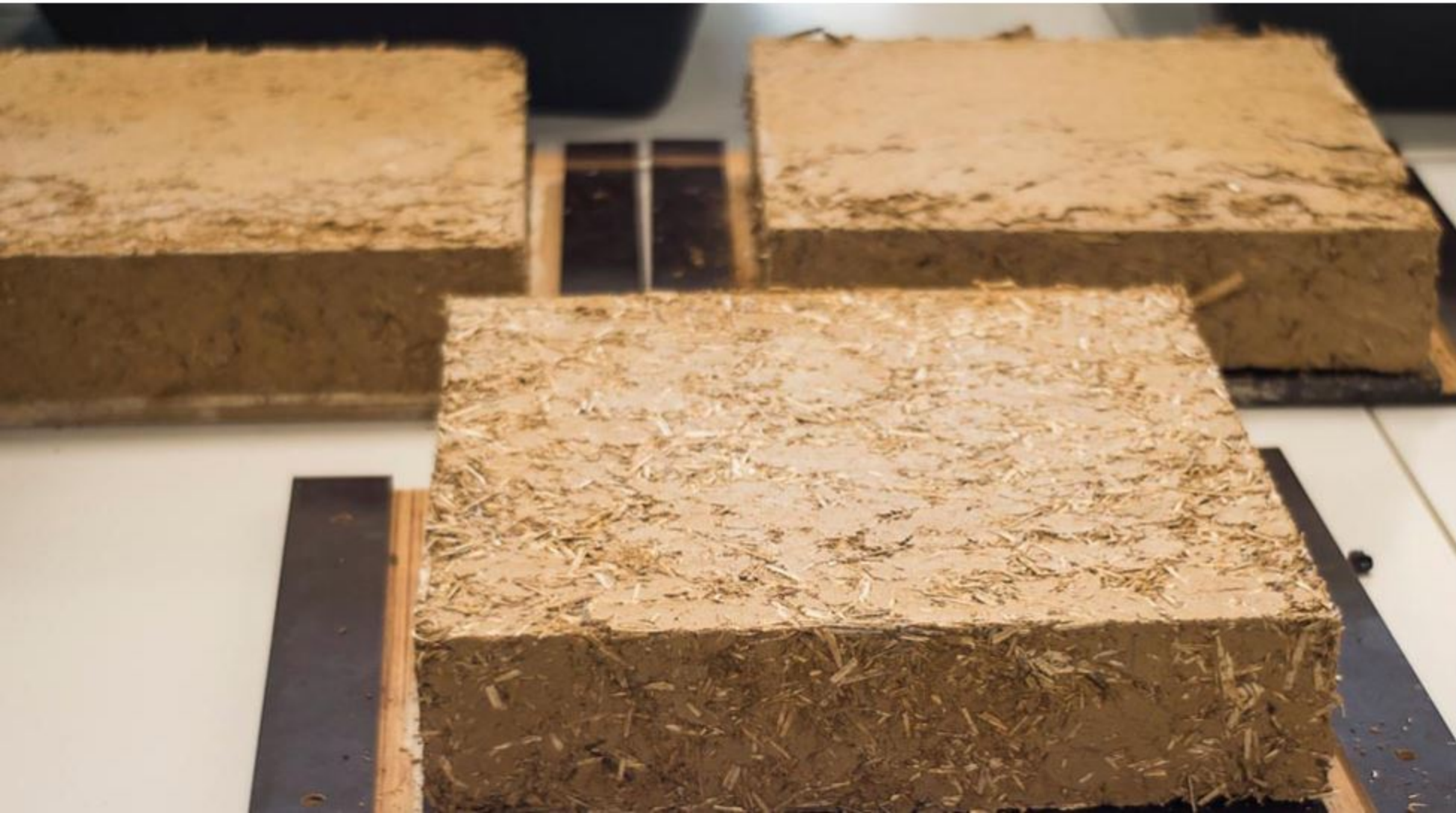


Research into a “Revolutionary” Project Could Transform Mainstream Homebuilding

CobBauge is making a big contribution to low-energy construction – we speak to Anthony Hudson of Hudson Architects about the project

By [Jack Woodfield](#) on 25 Sep 2019

Photographer: [University of Plymouth](#)



A “revolutionary” new system for building cob houses will have a significant impact on the environment and can be implemented into mainstream homebuilding, according to a leading architect.

Anthony Hudson of Hudson Architects is collaborating on CobBauge, the multi-million pound project that is creating a new generation of cob builds.

Cob builds use a mixture of earth, natural fibres and water, and while they have existed for centuries, it is only now that the construction industry has developed the sustainable and natural [construction technique](#) to ensure building constructed in this material meet current [Building Regulations](#) requirements.

The system works by combining two types of cob in one construction system, and complies with current thermal regulations both in the UK and France.

“Historically cob didn’t insulate as well as it could have; this is what’s so revolutionary about this new system,” says Mr Hudson. “It combines two types of cob in one construction system: lightweight and heavyweight. Heavyweight does the structure; lightweight does the insulation.”

Combining a denser mix with a lighter mix has been shown in phase I findings from CobBauge to have the potential to reduce the energy needed for heating homes, and to [prevent overheating](#) during the summer months. The construction method also complies with current thermal regulations both in the UK and France.

“This is the perfect example of a low-energy construction which doesn’t need huge amounts of energy to build. We currently recognise that we have an issue with energy and climate change. In construction we’re using too much energy and we need to be much more concerned with how we use this. It’s imperative that we look at technology and low energy building in construction to tackle this.”

The first phase of CobBauge, which was completed late last year, saw researchers perfect a unique double layer wall using an extensive range of different soil and fibre mixes.



The CobBauge project includes researchers from the University of Plymouth and partners in France. In June 2019 it was announced that the project will continue for four more years after receiving more than €4m in funding from the EU.

Can Self Builders Build Cob Houses?

According to Mr Hudson, the CobBauge project will aim to simplify the process of cob builds so that self builders and renovators can build their own house with the new system.

“While cob is a hands-on material, it is not complicated. It doesn’t require huge technical knowledge to build and people can be easily trained.”

Significantly, one of the benefits of cob houses is that the materials could be cheaper in the long-term. The CobBauge project is currently completing research and training about the most efficient ways of constructing cob houses.

The final stage of the project will involve forecasting the financial and environmental impact of cob builds, and look to see how the houses can be implemented in the mainstream.

The results of CobBauge will be shared with the wider construction industry and elucidate how developers and self builders can design or commission new homes.