



PAUL LEECH: GAÏA ECOTECHTURE

Architecture

Ecotechnics

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ABSTRACT

Learning from Building

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As multi-disciplinary, ecotechture has regard to buildings as living systems: The Village educational community was established in 1999, as an alternative to speculation, to be authentically-Irish, sustainable mixed rural development:

- Diversely inspired and, uniquely, member-owned.
- Prioritising quality of life with low environmental impact, broadband-enabled and complemented by community supported agriculture.

With 55 ecobuildings complete and occupied, the focus is now broadening while refining ecobuilding techniques. Cloughjordan already has the **most** hemp lime buildings. A housing co-op is now exploring open-source modular systems appropriate to local timber.

Dwelling referring back to the verb, is an active system, which, in particular, needs to be light, fresh, warm and dry: Passive-solar/ bioclimatic design optimises daylighting, reduces overshadowing and creates microclimate/ shelter from the prevailing wind. Deciduous plants avoid over-heating by seasonal shading and increase biodiversity. Forecourts, useful outdoor amenity spaces, oriented for good solar access particularly in mid-winter and mutual privacy, avoiding nuisance or noise. Natural materials and ventilation ensure healthy indoor air quality.

Traditional forms and durable details connect to the vernacular:

The Community Crescent which is built of locally-sourced materials; timberframe (prefabricated offsite), joinery, natural slate roof and hemplime walling is one third complete, with five more live-work units and two apartments to build.

Sally Starbuck BA BArch MRlA RIBA



Aspects of The Ecovillage Cloughjordan, Ireland:

It is already a realised project over 15 years, about half way to full completion in addition to the 55 households and live-work units, there is an enterprise centre, agronomy, new forestry and all zones of Permaculture already functioning. We have just built our home-studio there and also designed one of the community buildings and 10 other live-work units for the ecovillage.

Declan Kennedy visited at Easter and was impressed, as few ecovillages or Permaculture schemes extend to Zone 5, despite the 'chaordic' appearance; a very apt expression to reference directly in the full paper!

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