

# Lignacite: Building a Better Future

Giles de Lotbiniere, Chairman of Lignacite, discusses how the company is well placed to meet the recent upturn in demand for masonry blocks, and how new investment in state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment is providing specifiers with some of the most accurate and consistent products on the market.



## LIGNACITE

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## Response to Growing Demand

Lignacite is delighted to report that it was able to make the most of the upturn which started in the spring of 2013, having lived through five rather difficult years. This led to 2014 being the busiest year in the company's history, resulting in the largest turnover and profit since it was established in 1947.

The company's factory in Brandon was completely rebuilt and re-equipped in 2006, which meant that Lignacite was very well placed to meet the recent upturn in demand. It was also able to grow its market share as many of its competitors had closed works in East Anglia during the recession.

Brandon continues to produce both commodity blocks, including the new Carbon Buster that absorbs more CO<sub>2</sub> than is released during its manufacture, and a range of Architectural Facing Masonry (AFM). Products from Brandon have been used in a number of iconic buildings, such as the Gherkin by Foster & Partners, HOK's Olympic Stadium, the Athlete's Village, the Shard by Renzo Piano, and both Heathrow and Stansted Airports.

The company continues to focus on using sustainable and recycled aggregates, enabling designers and specifiers to improve their sustainability targets and achieve zero-carbon buildings. The original Lignacite block contains 50 per cent recycled material, including graded wood particles, a selected waste product from the British timber industry.

## Nazeing Plant Investment

As part of its ongoing development programme, Lignacite has recently invested over £2.5m at its Nazeing plant in Essex, enabling it to manufacture 1.4m blocks per month. This has included a new and much larger batching system, which was completed last year. Since then, a second Columbia machine has been installed with all the associated handling equipment, and new highly-insulated ovens have been built with the capacity to take 50 per cent more product. Curing is achieved using heat from the exothermic reaction of the cement, and the larger ovens will enable further savings in the amount of OPC required.

Lignacite has continued to invest in Columbia equipment because it believes that it produces the most accurate and consistent blocks in the market. This allows us to manufacture Architectural Facing Masonry to very tight tolerances, which in turn keeps wastage down, makes building easier and has helped to keep Lignacite at the forefront of innovation and sustainable masonry in the block world.

