

minimass portal frame warehouse
Case Study, June 2025

minimassTM



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1.0 Summary

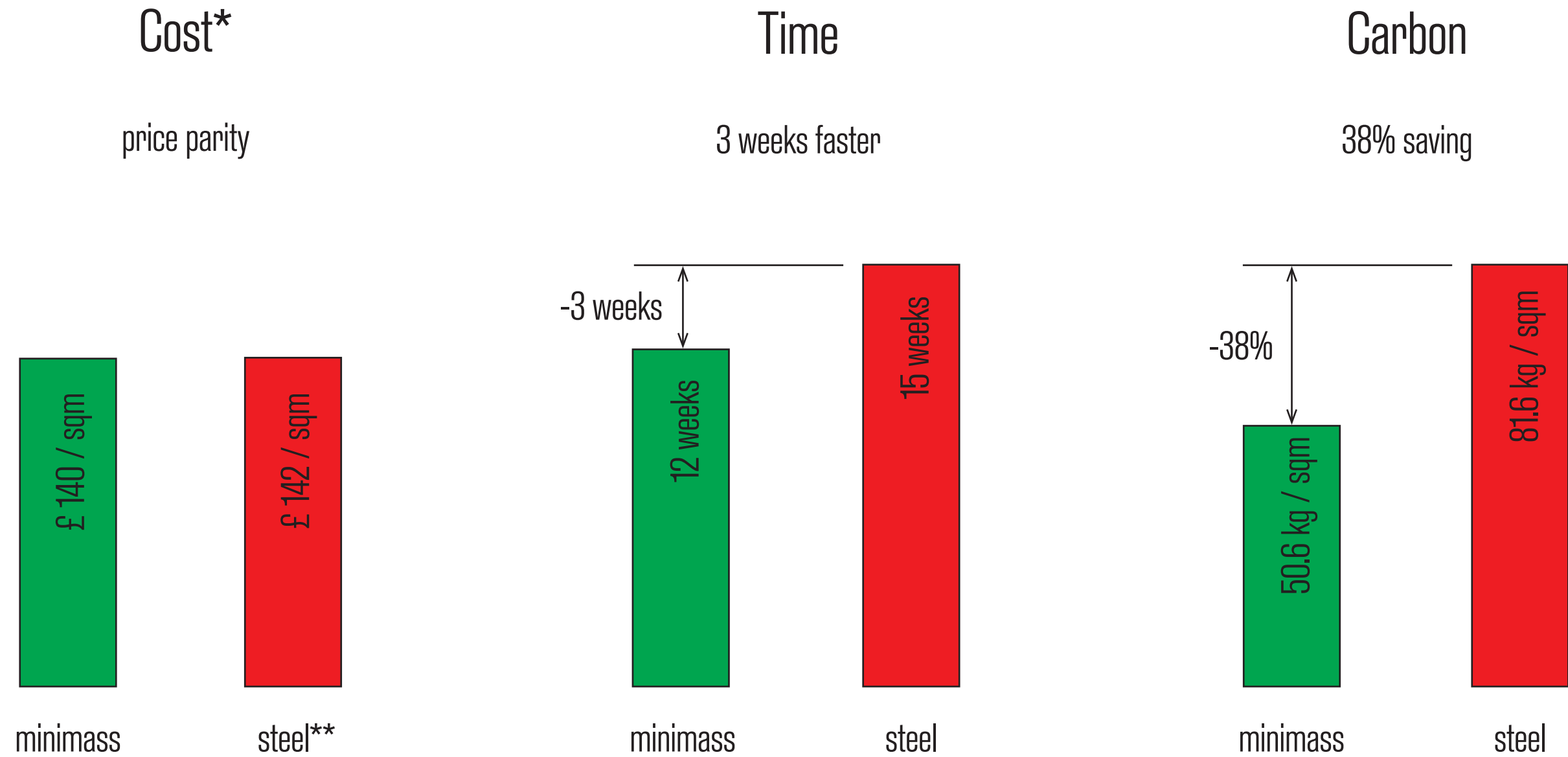
A detailed comparison study has been carried out for the design of a 48,000 sqft (4,445 sqm), two bay portal frame warehouse unit. The client has shared the steel contractor's drawings, with sizes and design loading and the minimass team has replicated the design of the same building, using the minimass system as the primary structural frame, instead of structural steel. Design information and assumptions are provided in the following pages of this report, as well as a selection of plan, elevation and section drawings.

For this project, the minimass solution can achieve a 38% reduction in embodied carbon for effectively the same price. As well as a very significant carbon saving, the minimass approach can achieve a predicted reduction in the overall timeline of 3 weeks.

These are major reductions that show the value of the minimass approach.

For more information about minimass, please refer to our website, www.minimass.net

2.0 Cost, time & carbon comparison



* includes prelims, design, supply of elements, connections and installation

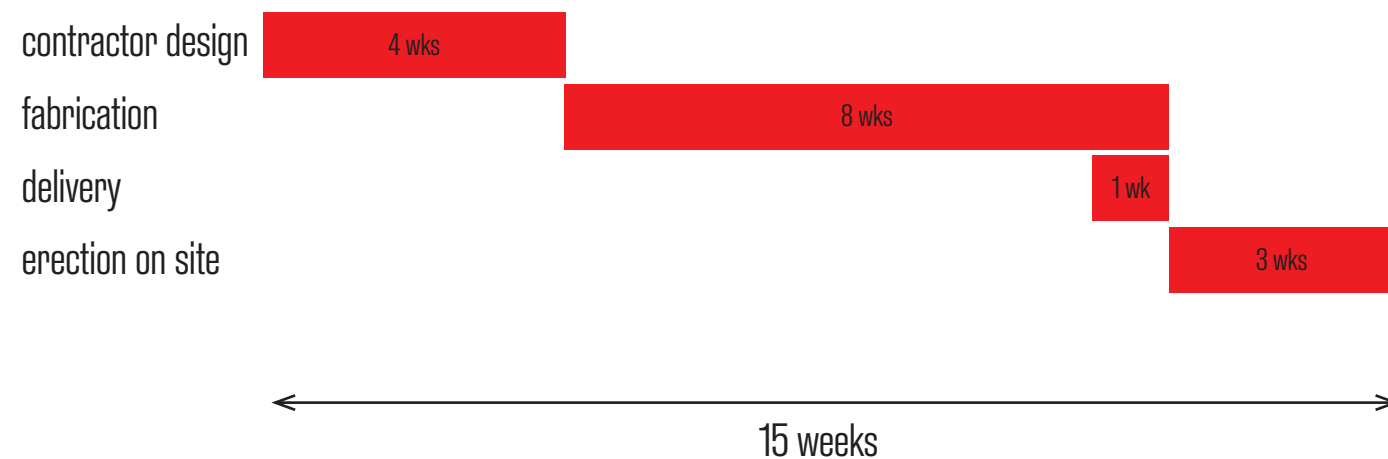
** based on recent tender pricing for open and closed sections.

3.0 Procurement and construction

The procurement and construction comparison here is for the primary structural frame only, on the basis that the other parts of the building will be the same for a minimass frame or a steel frame. Steel and minimass are directly comparable in this sector.

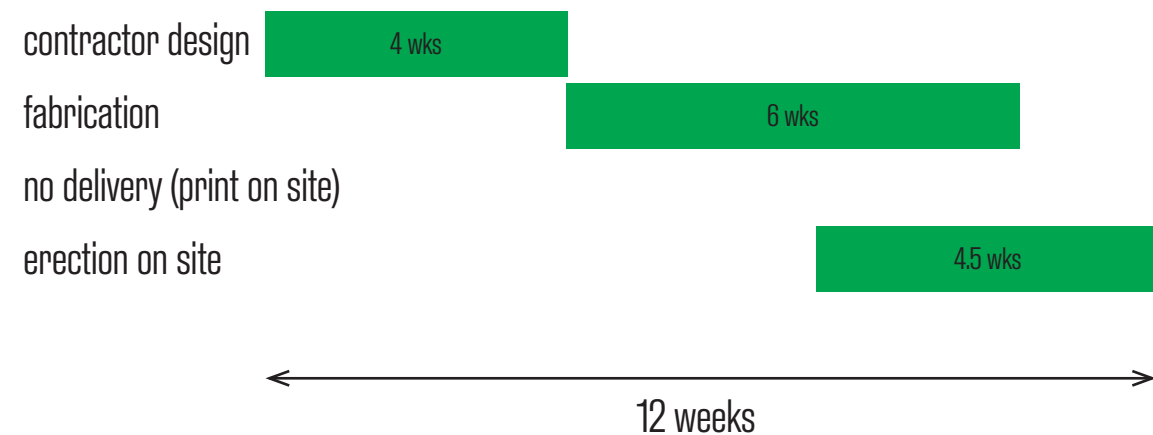
3.1 Steel construction programme

For a typical steel industrial building the lead-in time (time from order to arrival of elements on site) is expected to be approximately 12 weeks. This would break down into a period for contractor design / detailing followed by fabrication and delivery. For erection, a typical gang of 4 people, with a crane and MEWPs would erect 1,500 sqm of steelwork per week. For the schedule below, we have assumed 1 gang on site, requiring a total of 3 weeks for erection of the full 4,445 sqm.

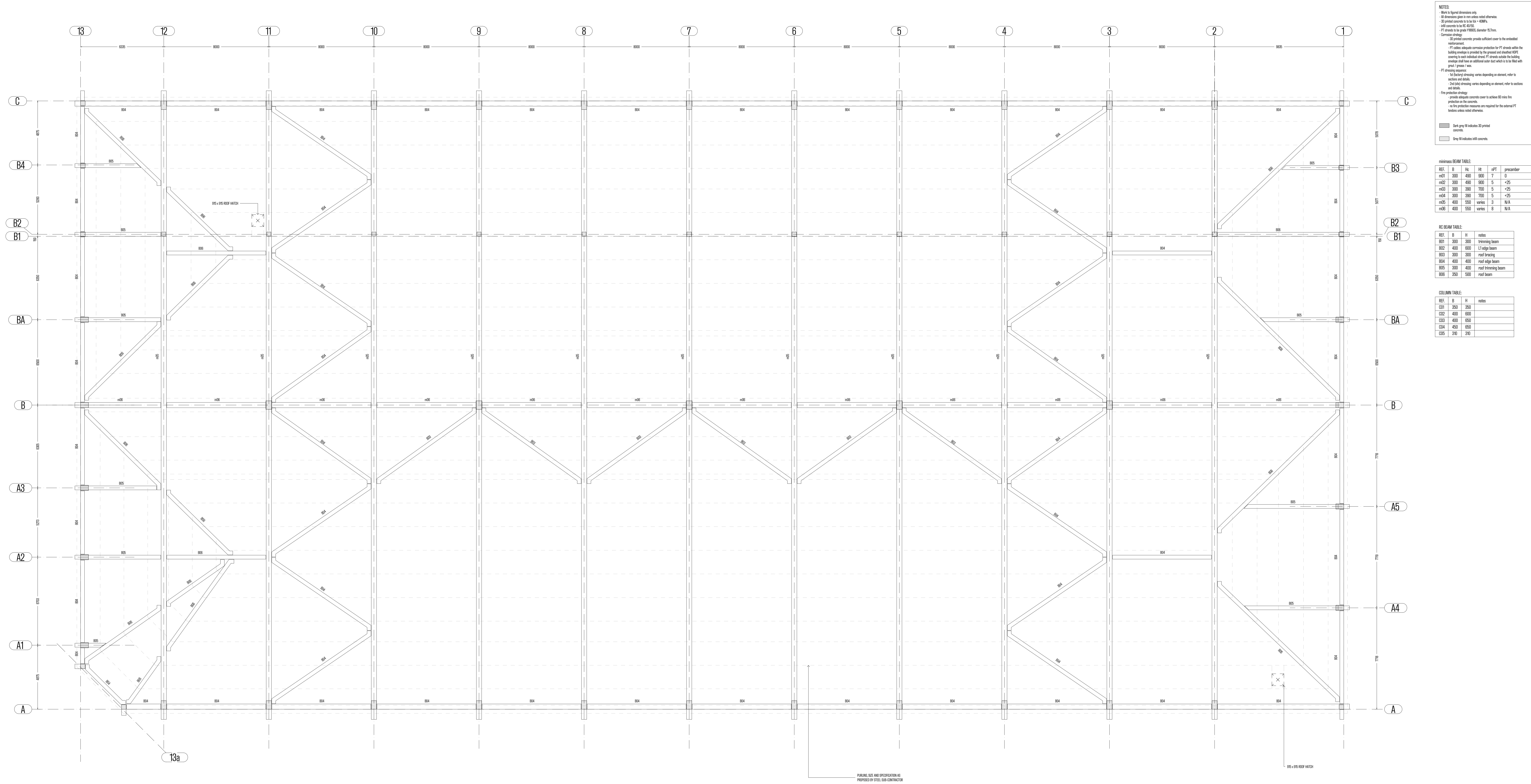


3.2 minimass construction programme

The printer is able to print at a speed of 250mm/s, which translates to 3100m of printer layer per working day (allowing for breaks, downtime, set up, wash out etc). We estimate that this project will therefore require 21 full days of printing spread out over 5 weeks. Each piece requires 7 days from the start of printing to being ready to transport and erect. Ideally, the printer would be set up for manufacture on site (adjacent to the construction area). That would allow all transport to be avoided. However, if there is not enough space on site, then the pieces can be manufactured off-site and delivered, with the site of manufacture being as close to the construction site as possible. At 1,000 sqm installed per week per gang (compared to 1,500 sqm for steel), this project would require 4.5 weeks assembly on site.



4.0 Drawings



ROOF PLAN

NOTES:
- All dimensions given in mm unless noted otherwise.
- 30 printed concrete to be 10 x 10 x 100mm.
- 30 printed concrete to be 10 x 10 x 100mm.
- PT strands to be grade 1960S, diameter 12.7mm.
- Corrosion strategy:
- 30 printed concrete provides sufficient cover to the embedded reinforcement.
- PT cables should be covered with 10mm PT strands within the building envelope to provide for the general and detailed RCPT covering to each individual strand. PT strands within the building envelope shall have an additional outer duct which is to be filled with grout / grease / resin.
- PT covering equipment:
- For factory covering varies depending on element, refer to sections and details.
- For site covering varies depending on element, refer to sections and details.
- Fire protection strategy:
- provide adequate concrete cover to achieve R180 into the production use for concrete.
- no fire protection measures are required for the internal PT beams as they are not exposed.

Legend:
- Dark grey fill indicates 30 printed concrete.
- Grey fill indicates 10 printed concrete.

minimums BEAM TABLE

REF	B	Hc	Rt	hPT	prescriber
m01	300	450	500	7	0
m02	300	450	500	5	>25
m03	300	300	700	5	>25
m04	300	300	700	5	>25
m05	400	550	varies	3	N/A
m06	400	550	varies	8	N/A

RC BEAM TABLE

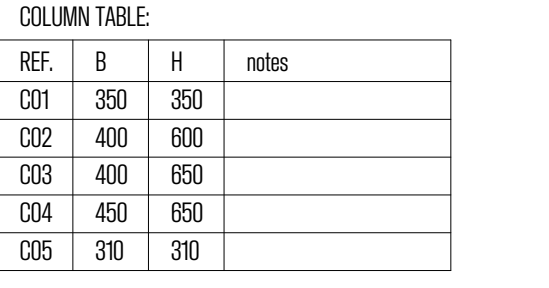
REF	B	H	notes
B01	300	300	trimming beam
B02	400	600	L1 edge beam
B03	300	300	roof trussing
B04	400	400	roof edge beam
B05	300	400	roof trimming beam
B06	350	500	roof beam

COLUMN TABLE

REF	B	H	notes
C01	350	350	
C02	400	600	
C03	400	650	
C04	450	650	
C05	350	350	



REF.	B	H	notes
001	350	350	
002	400	600	
003	400	650	
004	450	650	
005	310	310	



5.0 Technical design

The following list of assumptions and performance specifications lays out the basis of design for the minimass structure. Loads and minimum requirements have been provided by the client.

5.1 Size and shape

B	=	16 m	primary grid width
B_{sec}	=	8 m	secondary beam spacing (roof purlin span)
L	=	23.1 m	primary grid length
H	=	12 m	eaves height of the building (underside of the structure at the roof / column interface)
n_L	=	2	no. of bays in the span direction
n_B	=	12	no. of bays in the width direction (this can be increased or reduced to suit)
$\sum L$	=	46.3 m	total building width
$\sum B$	=	96.2 m	total building length

5.2 Lateral stability

In the span direction, the portal frame structure will provide the lateral stability. In the orthogonal direction to the portal frames, vertical cross bracing will be provided in the perimeter walls.

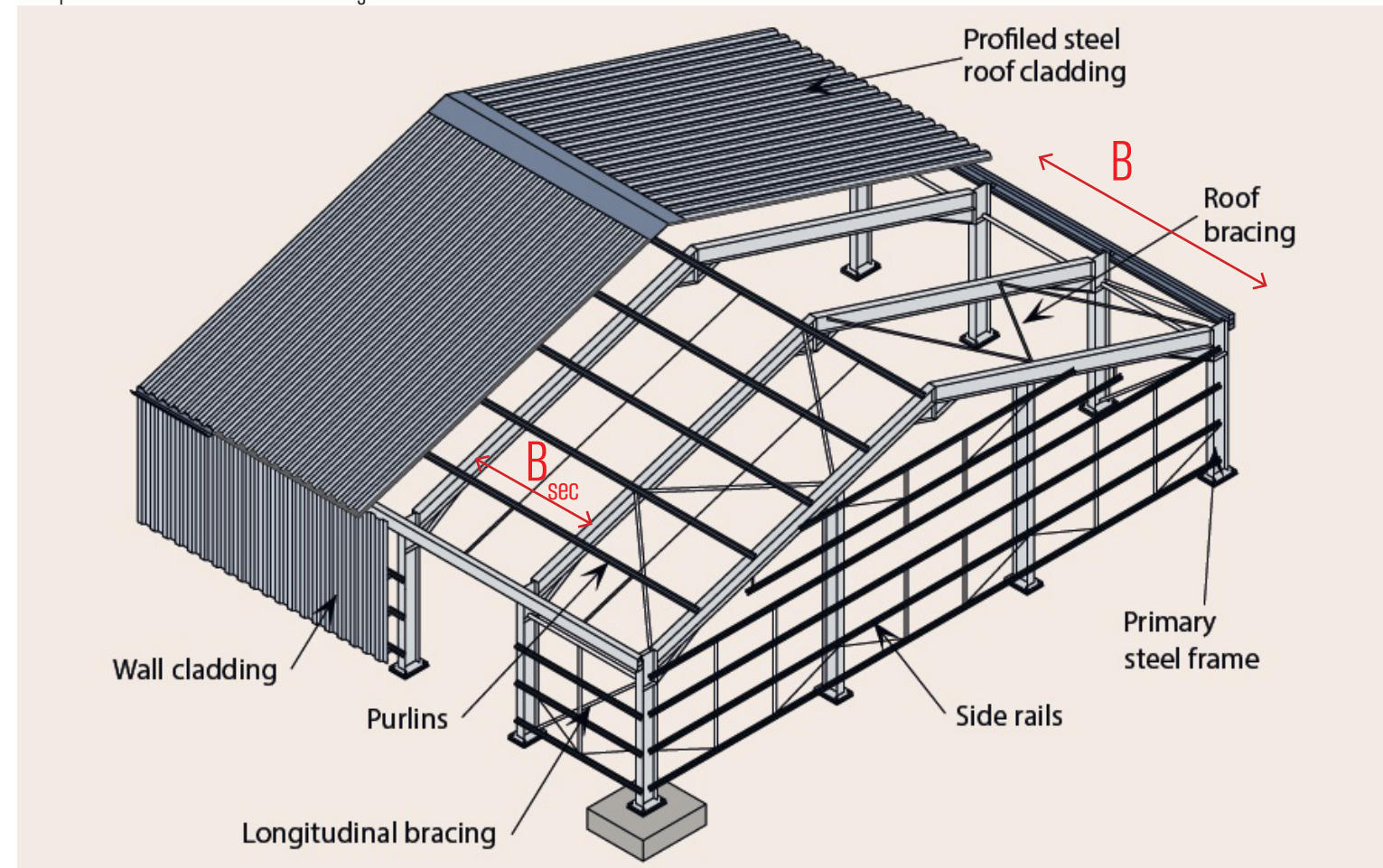
5.3 Roof build up

The roof surface is a structural metal deck that spans between cold-rolled purlins. The purlins span between the rafter beams, with a length of 8 m and a spacing of 1.8m (typ). This solution has been developed following the proposal to use Kingspan products as indicated in the steel contractor's drawings. Thermal insulation, roof skylights and hung services are all assumed to be incorporated in this design.

Rainwater drainage is provided by gravity fed gutters positioned at the perimeter and along two lines at the central area.



Example steel frame for an industrial building.



Schematic showing typical elements of an industrial building.

5.4 Materials

3D printed concrete	=	f_{ck} = 40 MPa (8mm aggregate)
infill concrete	=	RC40/50 (10mm aggregate)
mild steel reinforcement	=	B500B, f_y = 500 MPa, nominal cover = 30mm (min)
PT cables	=	Y1860S, f_y = 1860 MPa, 15.7mm diameter

5.5 Permanent loads

(kN/m²)	mezzanine (office)	mezzanine (store)	roof
Metfloor 60, 150 slab	2.73	2.73	-
decking + mesh	0.4	0.4	0.18
services + ceilings	0.5	0.5	0.25
raised access floor	0.25	0.0	0.0
PV	0.0	0.0	0.15
beam self-weight	as calculated	as calculated	as calculated
total	3.88 + s/w	3.63 + s/w	0.58 + s/w

5.6 Variable loads

(kN/m²)	mezzanine (office)	mezzanine (store)	roof
imposed load	4.0	12.5	0.6
partitions	1.0	0.0	0.0
total	5.0	12.5	0.6

5.7 Wind loads

$q_p(z)_x$	=	0.617 kPa	peak velocity pressure, X-dir (portal frame)
F_{wx}	=	596 kN	wind force acting in X-dir (portal frame)
$q_p(z)_y$	=	0.837 kPa	peak velocity pressure, Y-dir (along)
F_{wy}	=	572 kN	wind force acting in Y-dir (along)

Vertical wind loads (uplift and pressure) to be included in zones according to BS EN 1991-1-4.

5.8 Wall cladding

The external walls to the building will use the same system and design as proposed by the steel contractor i.e. cold-rolled side rails and metal cladding.

5.9 Fire protection

If this is required by the project, the external PT tendons would be wrapped in fire protective material, to achieve the relevant fire protection classification. The concrete elements have inherent fire resistant characteristics on the basis of adequate cover to the reinforcement.

5.10 Concrete connections

Refer to section 6.0 for further details.

5.11 Construction sequence

A detailed construction sequence has not been prepared for this specific case study, however, installation options can be described on request.

6.0 Concrete connections

Traditional concrete structures - even when using precast elements - will usually rely on “cast-in” or grouted dowel connections between pieces. The speed of these connection types is the primary drawback for concrete element construction compared to structural steel construction - which has very fast and well understood connections.

However, the minimass approach is to use bolted connections - for immediate connection strength and stiffness - but applied to concrete structures. This has become possible in recent times with the innovation in precast concrete connection technology, driven by suppliers such as Peikko. This method allows the transfer of tension, compression and shear directly across a joint using bolts which lap with reinforcement embedded on either side. Typically a gap is included between the two elements, to allow for positional tolerance, which is then grouted after the bolts are tightened. Whilst grout is still used in this case, the temporary (construction stage) loading is accommodated within the capacity of the bolts themselves, therefore the connection is strong enough immediately for erection to continue without waiting.

Bolted concrete connections are typically used in conditions where two parallel surfaces must be joined, e.g. for a column connecting to the top of a pad foundation, or for a beam connecting to the side of a column. For situations where other orientations are required, e.g. the connection of a diagonal brace member, this system does not work, without some sort of design intervention. However, this is precisely what minimass has achieved - where the steel industry has the ability to fabricate any connection geometry, minimass has the ability to design and manufacture any concrete connection geometry.

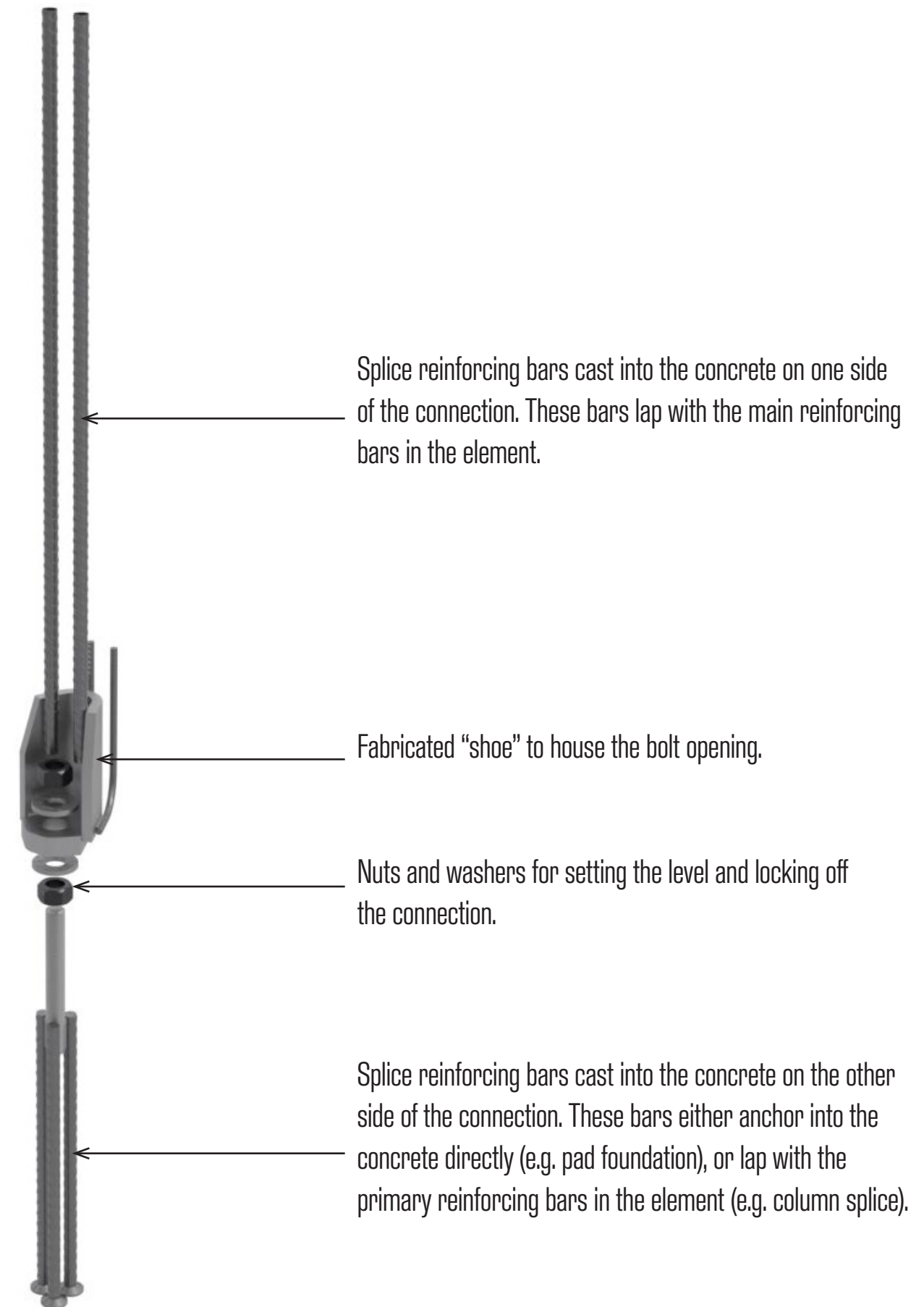
The use of these components generates a big increase in the speed of installation of concrete structures, bringing the erection time of a bolted concrete structure down to the same level as that of a traditional steel frame.



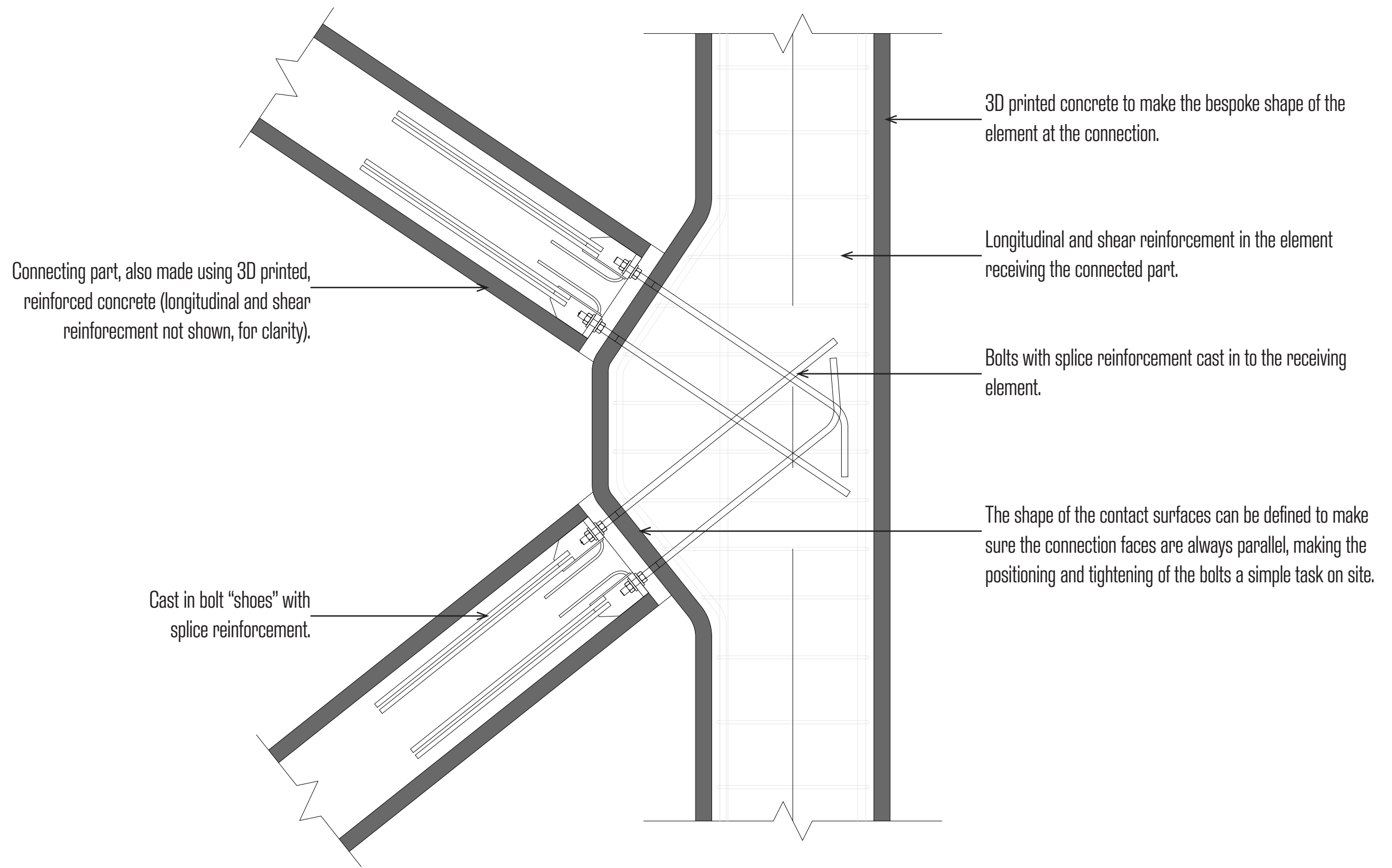
Peikko website image: concrete bolted connection during erection.



Peikko website image: concrete elements prefabricated with bolt locations.



Peikko website image: components of a bolted connection.



APPENDIX



A1: Detailed mass and carbon calculations

								per Functional element								total building mass								total building CO2e					
																minimass								original		minimass		original	
Element	Ref.	Functional element count	Total length m	Functional unit length	width m	height m	print path length m	3DCP kg	infill concrete kg	longitudinal rebar mass kg	shear rebar mass kg	no. PT strands	PT mass kg	steel design cross- section	length m	no.	mass kg	3DCP kg	concrete kg	rebar kg	PT kg	no. connectio ns nr	total printed path length m	steel kg	CO2e kg	CO2e/m2 kg/m2	CO2e kg	CO2e/m2 kg/m2	
Beams																													
mezz_store_primary beams	m01	11	91,67	8,33	0,3	0,49	191	620	1676	94,54	32	7	74,9	UB 686x254x152	9,35	2	1634	6820	18436	1389	824	11	1592	3269 6035 552	6261	1,4	17563	3,9	
mezz_store_secondary beams	m02	19	176,4	9,28	0,3	0,49	224	729	1846	134,94	35	5	61,5	UB 457x152x60	8	1	552	13851	35074	3236	1168	38	2080	3404 10373 2875 529	11755	2,6	30617	6,9	
mezz_office_primary beams	m03	11	86,33	7,85	0,3	0,39	177	605	1754	89,03	25	5	54,6	UB 457x191x74	10	4	851	6655	19294	1256	601	22	1389	240 754 3827 552	5794	1,3	9576	2,2	
mezz_office_secondary beams	m04	12	112,15	9,35	0,3	0,39	219	582	1686	135,84	30	5	68,3	UB 533x210x82	10	11	943	6984	20232	1990	820	24	2047	211 1886 4186 1380	7033	1,6	13655	3,1	
beam_main portal frame	m05	22	532,51	24,205	0,39	0,55	935	3020	13325	366,83	76	3	145,0	UB 686x254x125	10	2	1438	66431	293157	9746	3191	66	22632	16053 7615	63227	14,2	58679	13,2	
beam_internal transfer	m06	12	89,76	7,48	0,4	0,55	209	764	3585	132,59	18	8	84,5	UB 406x140x39	5,9	2	265	9168	43020	1591	1014	24	1563	9261 5798 3717 3940	10418	2,3	23977	5,4	
mezz_trimming beam	B01	9	32,89	3,65	0,3	0,3	79	263	526	26,53	10	0	0	UB 610x229x101	8	4	929	2367	4734	326	0	18	289	391 364 242 362	1249	0,3	2421	0,5	
mezz_trimming beam	B02	4	28,67	7,1675	0,4	0,6	202	688	3440	89,54	22	0	0	UB 203x133x25	2,8	3	81	2752	13760	446	0	8	1448	929 754 328 291	2608	0,6	4104	0,9	
beam_edge_along bays	B04	15	86,45	5,76	0,4	0,4	160	553	1659	65,38	17	0	0,0	UB 254x146x31	5,0775	2	181	8295	24885	1232	0	30	922	1410 2347	5558	1,2	10353	2,3	
beam_edge_across bays	B04	26	193,48	7,44	0,4	0,4	204	715	2143	84,42	22	0	0	SHS 150x150x5	6,10	15	156	18590	55718	2757	0	52	1518	1166 2839 1068	12445	2,8	13982	3,1	
beam_edge_mid_elevation	B04	16	128,34	8,02	0,4	0,4	219	713	2140	91,00	23	0	0	CHS 139.4x4.0	8,41	9	130	11408	34240	1829	0	32	1757	3291	7762	1,7	9071	2,0	
beam_roof_trimming	B05	10	60,57	6,06	0,3	0,4	129	436	1309	68,71	15	0	0	SHS 120x120x4.0	7,225	3	889	4360	13090	836	0	20	781	1415 1184	3085	0,7	4633	1,0	
beam_roof_eaves	B06	17	147,46	8,67	0,35	0,5	220	728	2913	153,75	18	0	0	UB 356x171x45	9,86	4	510	12376	49521	2922	0	34	1908	736 2040 720	10874	2,4	12778	2,9	
Columns																													
col_corner_edge	C01	9	112,50	12,50	0,35	0,35	308	1050	2625	141,80	35	0	0	UB 254x254x73	13,539	3	1137	9450	23625	1591	0	18	3850	3410 1682 1822	5865	1,3	14788	3,3	
col_mezz_store	C01	6	43,02	7,17	0,35	0,35	180	602	1505	81,34	20	0	0	UB 406x178x54	13,539	2	841	3612	9030	609	0	6	1291	1386 2667 2218	2242	0,5	8706	2,0	
col_edge_braced	C02	9	112,50	12,50	0,4	0,6	341	1200	6000	443,14	32	0	0	UB 406x140x39	13,539	3	607	10800	54000	4274	0	18	4263	3643 1682 716	12411	2,8	10765	2,4	
col_edge_portal frame	C03	22	259,01	11,77	0,4	0,65	323	1183	6680	342,24	32	0	0	UB 406x178x54	13,539	2	841	26026	146960	8227	0	22	3803	9731 8719 3519 15757	30359	6,8	67227	15,1	
col_internal	C04	5	61,85	12,37	0,5	0,585	391	1484	7199	548,16	35	0	0	UB 406x140x46	13,539	1	716	7422	35997	2914	0	10	4837	13935	8361	1,9	24832	5,6	
col_mezz_office	C05	5	35,85	7,17	0,31	0,31	165	533	1120	81,34	17	0	0	UB 610x229x140	13,539	4	2180	2665	5600	492	0	5	1183	3033	1550	0,3	5404	1,2	
Bracing																													
brace_roof_hor_diagonals	B03	6	56,31	9,39	0,3	0,3	194	676	1352	68,14	25	0	0	CHS 114.3x3.0	8,43	9	80	4056	8112	559	0	12	1821	718	2141	0,5	1979	0,4	
brace_verticals	B03	12	108,68	9,06	0,3	0,3	187	652	1305	65,75	24	0	0	SHS 180x180x5.0	9,85125	4	306	7824	15660	1078	0	24	1694	554 1224 1097	4131	0,9	7921	1,8	
brace_roof_hor_diagonals	B04	16	150,00	9,38	0,4	0,4	254	900	2701	159,53	27	0	0	SHS 160x160x5.0	10,02	4	274	14400	43216	2988	0	32	2381	1911 1551 267	10383	2,3	10279	2,3	
Totals																													



A2: Cost plan and comparison

These are feasibility level estimates and do not constitute a formal quote for the work.

			MINIMASS OPTION			STRUCTURAL STEEL OPTION		
25/06/2025								
SUMMARY								
DESCRIPTION			VALUE			VALUE		
PRECON, PRELIMINARIES			£ 64.629,76			£ 41.879,68		
DESIGN			£ 28.795,66			£ 48.110,84		
CONCRETE MEASURED WORKS			£ 423.449,68			£ 5.612,32		
STEELWORK MEASURED WORKS			£ 107.874,11			£ 539.205,81		
TOTAL			£ 624.749,21			£ 634.808,65		
			/sqm 140,55			/sqm 142,81		

PRECON, PRELIMINARIES			MINIMASS			STEEL		
Item	Bill description	Unit	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount
A	CONSTRUCTION DESIGN , PRECON AND PRELIMINARIES							
P4	Pre Construction / Design Management							
P5	Project Manager	wks	4,00	3.165,28	12.661,12	4,00	3.165,28	12.661,12
P5	Construction Phase Management							
P6	Project Manager	wks	5,00	3.165,28	15.826,40	3,00	3.165,28	9.495,84
P8	Site Engineer	wks	5,00	2.527,20	12.636,00	3,00	2.527,20	7.581,60
P9	Safety Supervisor	wks	5,00	517,95	2.589,75	3,00	517,95	1.553,85
P11	Storeman/Traffic Marshall	wks	5,00	1.381,21	6.906,05	3,00	1.381,21	4.143,63
P7	Site Welfare, Office, compound, security , water, power, hoarding	wk	-		BY OTHERS	-		BY OTHERS
P9	Local on site stores	wks	5,00	24	120,00	3,00	24	72,00
P10	Transport/on/off	nr	2,00	210	420,00	2,00	210	420,00
P11	Erect/Dismantle	nr	2,00	342,72	685,44	2,00	342,72	685,44
	Communications							
P12	Internet Connection	sum	1,00	1.200,00	1.200,00	1,00	1.200,00	1.200,00
P13	Rental	Qtr	3,00	96	288,00	3,00	96	288,00
P14	Calls	wks	5,00	42	210,00	3,00	42	126,00
P15	Copier	wks	5,00	30	150,00	3,00	30	90,00
P16	Stationary	wks	5,00	18	90,00	3,00	18	54,00
P12	Site two way radios	wks	5,00	14,4	72,00	3,00	14,4	43,20
	Printer on site							
	set up / take down and protect	PROV SUM	1,00	-	5.000,00			EXCLUDED
	Miscellaneous Plant Not in Rates							
P15	Setting out instruments	wks	5,00	234	1.170,00	3,00	234	702,00
P16	Cube Tank	wks	5,00	54	270,00	3,00	54	162,00
	Temporary electrics							
P17	Task lighting (tripods)	week	5,00	120	600,00	3,00	120	360,00
P18	Leads	week	5,00	60	300,00	3,00	60	180,00
P19	Transformers	week	5,00	81	405,00	3,00	81	243,00
P11	Skips							
P12	Concrete Washout	wks	5,00	336	1.680,00	3,00	336	1.008,00
P12	Rubbish skips 8yrd/8t	wks	5,00	270	1.350,00	3,00	270	810,00
					64.629,76			41.879,68

STRUCTURE DESIGN			MINIMASS			STEEL		
Item	Bill description	Unit	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount
T	STRUCTURE DESIGN							
	Design Manager	wks	3	3.160,16	9.480,48	6	3.160,16	18.960,96
U	Detailing	wks	5	1.966,94	9.834,70	10	1.966,94	19.669,40
V	Design Engineer	wks	3	3.160,16	9.480,48	3	3.160,16	9.480,48
					28.795,66			48.110,84

CONCRETE MEASURED WORKS			MINIMASS			STEEL		
Item	Bill description	Unit	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount
CONCRETE MEASURED WORKS								
[003]	GROUNDWORKS							
B3	Installation of new warehouse structure - base slab / foundations							
B33	Cast in concrete; base plate and bolts for connection ground slab with steel columns UB45- BASED ON FREE ISSUED	nr	-	100,22	0,00	56,00	100,22	5.612,32
	minimass holding down bolts included in connections elsewhere							
	sub total				0,00			5.612,32
B4	WAREHOUSE STRUCTURE							
1	Beams	m	1.767,00	149,11	263.475,26			EXCLUDED
2	Columns	m	625,00	137,12	85.697,88			EXCLUDED
3	Bracing	m	315,00	102,21	32.196,54			
1	Allowance connections	PROV SUM	526,00	80	42.080,00			EXCLUDED
					423.449,68			5.612,32

STEELWORK MEASURED WORKS			MINIMASS			STEEL		
Item	Bill description	Unit	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount	Bill quantity	Rate	Amount
STEELWORK AND CLADDING MEASURED WORKS								
Materials								
A	Beams	t	-	-	N/A	111,04	1.990,39	221.012,59
B	Columns	t	-	-	N/A	73,92	1.736,48	128.360,80
C	Bracing	t	-	-	N/A	7,32	2.780,53	20.353,51
I	Holding down bolts	nr	-	-	N/A	224	5,4	1.209,60
J	Fittings	t	-	-	N/A	9,61	3.036,00	29.188,10
J	Transport	nr	-	-	N/A	20	1.320,00	26.400,00
	assumes the minimass pinter is set up on site, avoiding the need for transport cost							
K	Finishing, estimate e.g. fire protection	m2	4400	7,5	33.000,00	4400	15	66.000,00
	sub total				33.000,00			492.524,60
N	Install frame							
	Install Frame	t	2.707,00	26,18	70.874,11	201,89	231,22	46.681,21
	Post-tensioning labour	days	10,00	400,00	4.000,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	sub total				74.874,11			46.681,21
					107.874,11			539.205,81

A3: Carbon assumptions

Embodied carbon calculations are based on the methodology outlined in the document, “How to calculate embodied carbon”, 2nd edition, published by the Institution of Structural Engineers. Unlike the calculations for complete structures or buildings, the comparison here is well defined and simple to assess. For each beam type, the mass of concrete, reinforcement, steel and timber has been estimated, then multiplied by the appropriate weighting factor.

The weighting factors that have been used are as follows, with all units given as kg CO2e / kg of material:

stage	A1 - A3	A1 - A5	A - C	D	sequestration	notes
poured concrete	0.130	0.133	0.143	-0.007	0	IStructE Carbon tool v3, UK C40/50 (25% GGBS)
printed concrete	0.129	0.143	0.161	0	0	Constructionarium bridge project mix design, with embodied carbon estimated based on constituent materials, with data from ICE database v3.0. C30/37, 360 kg/m ³ CEM II/A-L, 130 kg/m ³ limestone fines, admixtures.
reinforcement	0.720	0.862	0.872	0.438	0	IStructE carbon tool v3, UK 97% recycled EAF production
PT strand	1.724	1.986	1.996	-0.850	0	IStructE carbon tool v3, Europe average
mild steel (open)	1.740	1.782	1.792	-0.910	0	IStructE carbon tool v3, UK open rolled steel sections
mild steel (closed)	2.590	2.756	2.766	-1.610	0	IStructE carbon tool v3, UK open rolled steel sections

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