

The School of Natural Building

Residential Courses in Natural Building



For students of built environment disciplines across architecture, engineering, planning, landscape and more.

hello@schoolofnaturalbuilding.co.uk



Empower Your Students with Hands-On Sustainable Building Experience!

In an era demanding sustainable solutions, our courses provide invaluable experience in construction practices that actively combat climate and ecological breakdown

The School of Natural Building (SNaB) offers unique residential and on-campus programs designed to equip your students with practical skills and a deep understanding of natural building techniques.



Our Flexible Programme Options:

Option A: Hosted at Tod College, Todmorden

This community owned learning hub is the perfect venue for practical workshops

- **Programmes:** 2-5 days, 9 am - 5 pm, tailored to your students' needs and cohort size with a mix of theory and practical sessions.
- **Accommodation:** Options available for groups up to 80, all within a 15-35 minute drive from the college.
- **Transport:** SNaB can arrange return coach travel and local transfers, and liaise with your institution's booking processes.

Option B: Hosted at YOUR Institution

We bring our expertise directly to you! Our packages of theory and practical learning can be delivered at your premises, requiring either a workshop/covered area or a classroom space.

Email us for a quote today!

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Practical Training Formats for Any Cohort Size

Build a Straw Bale Structure

2+ days

40 - 80 Students

Students will construct a 4 x 4m straw bale structure from scratch, including:

- tyre foundations
- carpentry
- clay plastering.



Practical Intro to Natural Building

2+ days

Max 15 Students

Students will build and compress a section of straw bale wall using specialised rigs, then apply clay plaster. Optional:

- Lime plastering
- Theory lectures

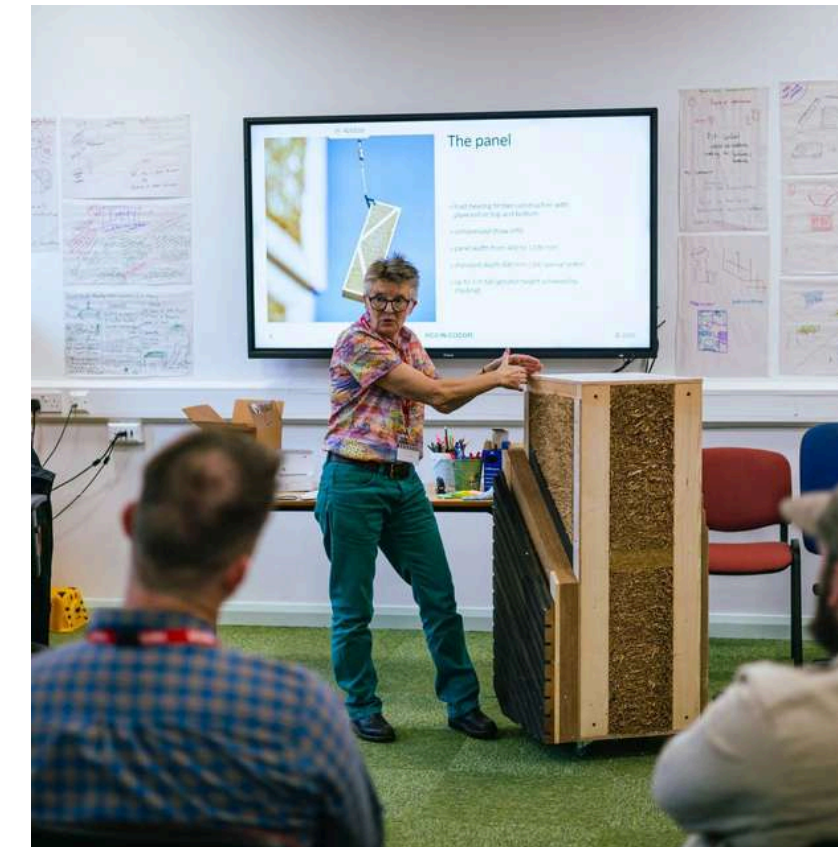




We can come to you!

All of our theory courses can be delivered at your institution - often including interactive elements and demonstrations

We recommend an introductory lecture, either in-person or online, ahead of all practical residential courses. This will cover key theory, what to expect from the course and a chance for preliminary questions.



Building with Bales

0.5 - 1 day

Classroom Based

A comprehensive introduction to building and designing with straw bales, including practical demonstrations and design principles. Can be tailored to student level.



Choose from a range of sessions: Straw Building

Straw Bale Building

PRACTICAL

- How to dress and customise bales
- Notching
- Loadbearing and infill techniques
- Associated carpentry - creating reveals around windows and doors; fixing posts
- Making the walls straight
- Compression of the wall

Straw Bale Technical Details

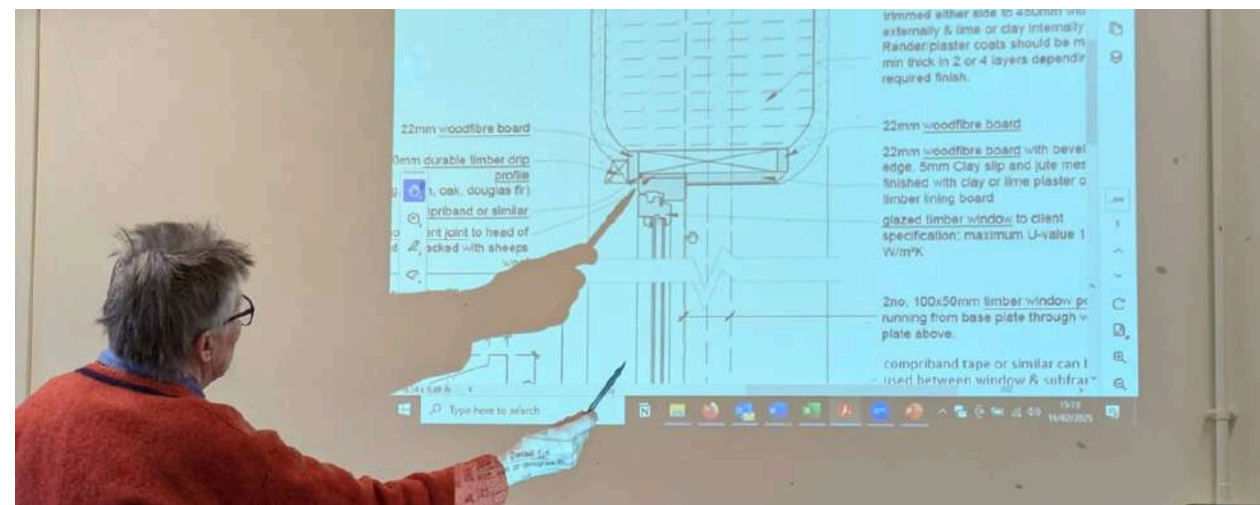
THEORY

- **Natural materials 101:** Embodied and operational emissions in the built environment
- **Straw building methods** (loadbearing / infill / prefabricated), compression and timber framing
- **UK Straw EPD and Technical Guide**
- Designing with the bale in mind

Scaling up straw: prefabricated EcoCocon panels

THEORY

- The challenges around scaling up straw & **introducing prefabrication**
- Qualities & standards
- How to design and build with panels
- Panel build-up including internal and external finishes
- Opportunity for students to get hands-on with panels



Choose from a range of sessions: Plasters and Foundations

Hands-on Natural Plasters

PRACTICAL

- How to make **clay plaster** from **raw materials**
- Use of different plastering tools
- Preparing the walls for plastering
- Applying the **slip, dubbing and first coat**
- Using **jute mesh**
- We can also teach to apply **ready-mixed clay plaster**



Natural Plasters: Clay & Lime

THEORY

- **Historical precedents** – plasters that last.
- How and why lime works better than cement
- **The natural cycle of lime**
- Humidity regulation and healthy indoor air quality



Cement-free foundations

THEORY

- Designs to meet **Building Regulations**
- Limecrete
- Foamed glass rafts and plinths
- Gravel trenches
- **Rammed car tyres**
- Timber

PRACTICAL

- Setting site lines and ramming tyres with pea shingle

Choose from a range of sessions: Insulation and Retrofit

Applying natural fibre insulation

PRACTICAL

- Working with **wood fibre insulation**
- Preparing walls for applying insulation
- Plastering, meshes and protecting from the elements
- Internal vs External application of insulation

Note: Dependent on live retrofit works at Tod college

Retrofit + natural insulations

THEORY

- Embodied and operational emissions
- Insulation is more than just u-values
- Where to source materials and the latest innovation in natural fibre insulation
- Practical applications for different building types

Talk to us about the needs of your students - **We can tailor a bespoke curriculum just for them!**

Drop us an email at:

hello@schoolofnaturalbuilding.co.uk

and tell us:

- Your cohort size,
- Preferred dates
- Curriculum needs

We look forward to building with you!



The background image shows a group of people in a workshop setting, surrounded by natural building materials like straw and wood. Some people are wearing blue jackets, and there's a bag with a cow logo and the word 'NUTRITION' visible on the left. The scene is outdoors or in a semi-enclosed space with wooden structures.

Our Trainers

The School of Natural Building has been operating for over a decade, teaching students, professionals and self-builders how to build with natural materials and methods.

Founded by life long builder and straw pioneer, **Barbara Jones**, we are advocating for the mainstream adoption of natural building in the face of the climate crisis.

Barbara and the SNaB team have a wealth of experience in the construction and natural building sector and will ensure students have a **positive, impactful learning experience**.

Our Facilities

Following a 5-year campaign, **Tod College**, a former vocational college, was transferred into community ownership from Calderdale Council in 2021.

The centre functions as a **community hub and learning centre**, with a focus on sustainability. The building is **fully accessible** and boasts a variety of spaces for all sorts of uses.

What do our learners say?

“Over two days I'm pleased to say **we successfully built a small straw bale house** and did everything from tyre foundations, to framing and dressing the bales. I left absolutely exhausted but with so much more knowledge than I had before **and a smile on my face.**”

**Ada-leena Nwora, Student,
Nottingham Trent**

“It was a pleasure to be taught by the School of Natural Building, for straw bale construction, clay and lime plasters. Barbara Jones and her team are **passionate about sharing theoretical knowledge as much as practical experience.**”

**Albane Duvillier, Tutor at the
Architectural Association**

“Last week was fascinating... It was a great opportunity to provoke conversation as to how to better use strawbale construction and natural materials to **reduce embodied carbon in the built environment.**”

Matthew Duckett, Engineer

The Value of Hands-on Learning

Our courses facilitate the educational and personal development of students...



Bringing fun to a dynamic learning environment...



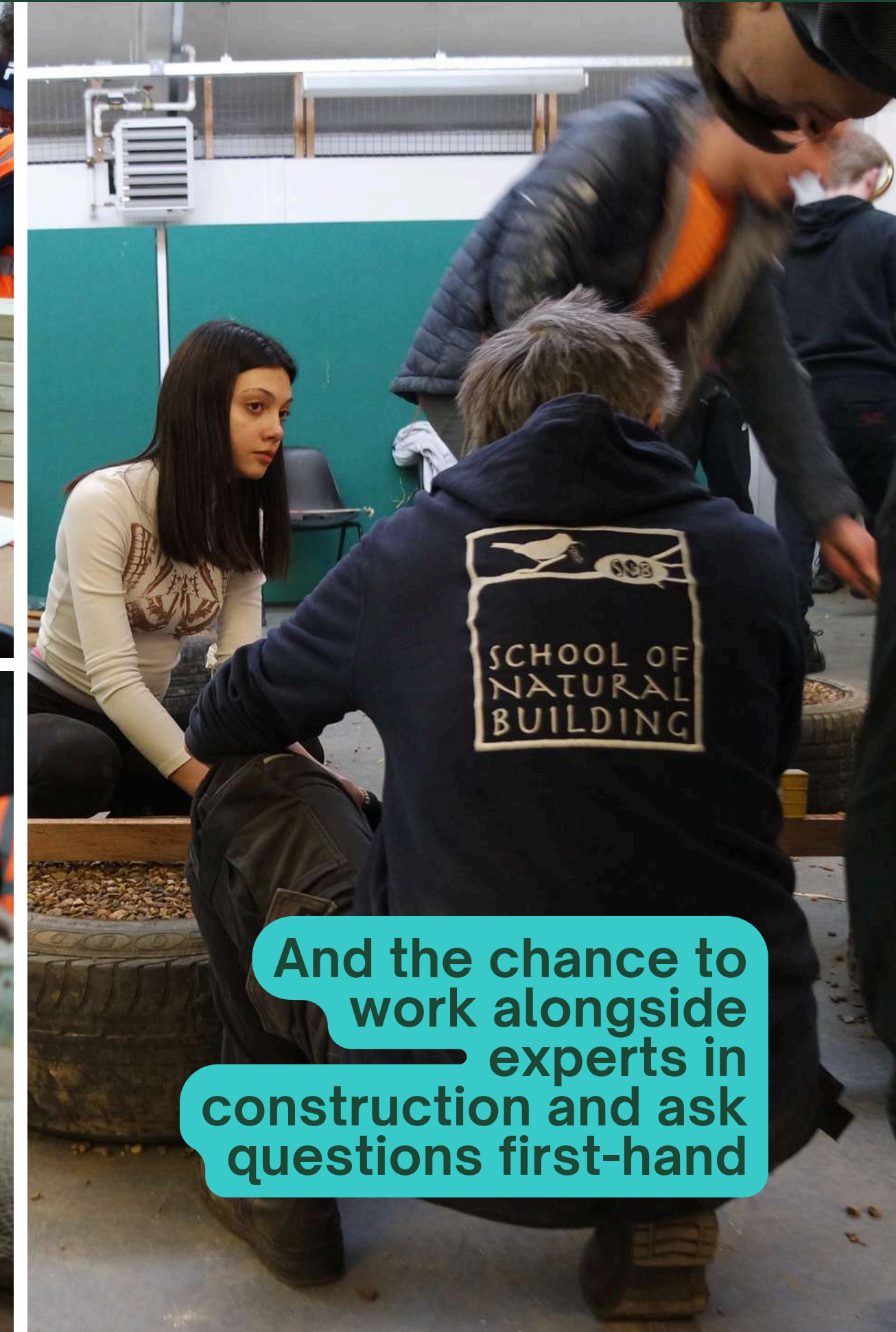
Practical problem solving - putting down the pen and picking up the tools...



Handling and understanding materials in practice...



And the chance to work alongside experts in construction and ask questions first-hand



Course Features



A taste of the topics we can cover



Car tyre foundations



Straw bale building



Clay & lime
plastering



Carpentry skills



Prefabricated
construction
systems:
EcoCocon straw
panels

eco
coccon

For more information and to discuss a
tailored programme for your cohort,
please contact us at:

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We look forward to building with you!

