



United Kingdom

There is a **shortage of new homes**, mainly due to the speed of construction. While the industry is beginning to focus on alternative building systems that are faster to erect, it is also addressing lightweight cladding and roofing systems as alternatives to brick and concrete tiles/slate. As with many innovations in the housing sector, social housing is leading the way.

Opportunities

Opportunities exist for:

- ① Canadian wood-frame homes;
- ② wood-frame housing components;
- ③ panel and engineered wood products;
- ④ window and door systems;
- ⑤ lightweight roofing and cladding;
- ⑥ mechanical systems;
- ⑦ value-added wood products (e.g. hardwood flooring); and
- ⑧ new technologies and construction techniques.

Recently, the UK has formerly recognized Canada as a global leader in housing technology and innovative building products. The British government has encouraged its industry to "look abroad" to acquire new products, technologies and skills. This endorsement of our industry should help many Canadian firms to enter this highly competitive market.

The UK imports approximately 80% of its requirements in wood products, and this situation is unlikely to change in the future. Particle boards are largely imported from European sources, and plywood is increasingly imported from South America and

Asia, to a combined level of over 2.5 million cubic metres every year. Canadian lumber standards are still used by the industry. While price competition is fierce, Canadian suppliers should ensure quality and emphasize this in their marketing activities.

Suppliers of building products should consider the **Do-it-Yourself (DIY) and Home Improvement Market**, which is currently growing at over 10% a year. The current UK consumer fad with DIY has certainly been boosted by prime-time UK television programs, as well as several consumer magazines. A major trend has been the development of the DIY retail superstore, to the detriment of the smaller Ma and Pa stores, which are now facing an increasingly bleak future.

There are no serious barriers to the British housing market, but a number of technical considerations do exist. This includes phytosanitary requirements applied to most species of Canadian softwood. Suppliers of building products and components should also familiarize themselves with British or European standards. It is advisable that companies obtain certification of their products' performance. Although not without some expense, this provides a clear indication to architects and specifiers of product quality and reliability.

Suppliers of timber are also under increasing pressure from their customers to demonstrate that their products originate from well-managed forests. Certification by the Forest Stewardship Council or equivalent is a requirement to be a regular supplier to leading DIY outlets. The selection of suitable local partners is central to success in the UK housing market. This local partner provides vital insight into British business practices, market characteristics and strategies, as well

as legal, financial and importation procedures. The partner also advises on contractual arrangements and handles other technical matters. Time and personal contact are usually required to cement a productive business relationship.

For further information, contact:

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Canadian Sustainable Forestry Certification

Coalition: <http://www.sfms.com>

Construction Industry Board:

<http://www.ciboard.org.uk>

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions: <http://www.detr.gov.uk>

Timber Trade Federation: <http://www.ttf.co.uk>

Major Shows

DIY and Home Improvement Show, London,

January 20-22, 2002:

<http://www.diyshow.com>

For the Do or Build It Yourself hardware, tools and home decor markets. Trade Only.

Interbuild, Birmingham, June 2-6, 2002:

<http://www.unilinkfairs.com>

or

<http://www.interbuild.co.uk>

An international building and construction exhibition, featuring: bathrooms; building interiors, flooring and kitchens; electrical; domestic heating and plumbing; doors, windows and facades; structural building; information technology; lighting; plant, tools and wood-working; pipelines; civil engineering and building services. Trade Only.