

Product of Cornwall



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MARK Sustainability Statement



1.0 MARK and Sustainability

As MARK's founders, we believe in the power of design to reconcile complex problems in innovative ways.

Our design brief for the company was to supply a range of practical and enduring furniture, whilst minimising environmental impact and maximising the economic and social benefit for the communities in which we are based.

We address this by adhering to the following four principles:

Design for sustainability

Using prudent design to be resourceful – making our furniture the best we can with the minimum physical resource.

Design for durability

Ensuring that our products are physically strong, but equally importantly, that they have a timeless quality and will hold their interest and value. We call this 'emotional durability'.

Local manufacture.

We aim to manufacture as locally as possible to bring value into the poorest UK region, to reduce manufacturing miles, and to increase our 'zone of influence'.

Responsible sourcing.

Using and extending our knowledge to ensure we are not using materials and processes which are harmful to the environment.

Through these principles we aim to have a positive and measurable impact on our "triple bottom line" – ie **social, environmental, and economic sustainability** or **people, planet, profit**. This document gives more information about how we implement these principles. Through these we are addressing our triple bottom line, and working towards independent accreditation. For example **we provide detailed environmental impact information for every product** as a first step towards **developing an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD)** for every item we manufacture. However **we wish to go beyond this**, and see ourselves as an **industry leader in sustainable manufacture**.



2.0 MARK's principles

2.1 Design for Sustainability

According to UK Design Council research, 80% of the environmental impact of a product is determined at the design stage. Whilst the carbon footprint of a poorly designed product may be reduced through improvements in material and process selection, prudent design choices can reduce the amount of material needed in the first instance, or eliminate altogether the need for harmful processes.



Example: MARK does not use chromium plating – the process is hazardous to the environment, depletes a scarce resource, and produces a composite product that cannot be recycled. However ‘chrome’ is a very practical and hardwearing surface. But by ensuring we do not use steel on high impact areas of products and by designing for alternatives such as brass and aluminium we have designed-out the need to use chromium plating.

We also aim to design for disassembly. Whilst we expect our furniture to last for many years, we consider its end of life at the design stage. Principally this means ensuring that products can be disassembled into different waste streams for recycling or reuse.



Example: the Wave table is made of two principal materials – timber and stainless steel. The stainless steel can be recycled and the timber can be re-used or recovered as fuel or fibre to make further fibre based products. This is only possible through the simple separation of the two elements using screws rather than rivets or adhesives.



2.2 Design for Durability

There are two aspects to this – physical and emotional durability. Furniture is discarded because it is out of fashion, no longer fit for purpose or simply ‘tired’ more often than it breaks or wears out irreparably. Physical durability is an engineering challenge whereas emotional durability requires us to look to and understand human needs and desires well into the future. The pursuit of emotional durability is therefore a key preoccupation of MARK.



Example: physical durability.

The Arris chair is made by our partner company who have been in business since 1986 and have been making chairs in quantity since 1990. Very many of these are still in service, including those in commercial premises. We use traditional and time-served joinery techniques in the construction of Arris, assisted by precision computer controlled machinery. The design features a 3-way joint which is both a decorative feature, and the structural lynchpin of the whole design.

Although difficult or impossible to evidence emotional durability, interior designers and specifiers appreciate MARK’s product range for its ability to be able to work with a wide variety of styles. The range has been commented on in the press as being contemporary, yet with an enduring timelessness. We hope time will tell and that our products will survive future interior redesigns.

An important aspect of durability is the capacity of furniture to be refurbished and renewed. We build this in to our choices of materials and finished so that products will actually improve rather than deteriorate with age (eg with timber products). Fabric covers may be removed and replaced, and we use only oiled furniture finishes – so that repolishing in years to come will restore the wood to its former glory.



2.3 Local manufacture

We manufacture locally for a number of reasons including greater quality control and lower transport costs for example. Key reasons are our desire to enhance and improve the local economy, to sustain and develop skills in the UK manufacturing base, and our aim to reduce manufacturing miles and the unnecessary shipping of goods around the world. Most importantly, local manufacturing enlarges our zone of influence – we are able to challenge and change working practices of local suppliers in a way that would not be possible if manufacturing at overseas sites.

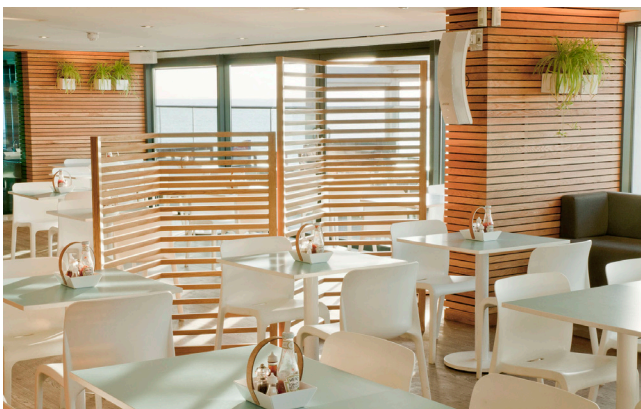
It is an important distinction to make that MARK actually manufactures in the UK rather than assembling or finishing goods that have been manufactured offshore which is common in the industry.

Currently 80% of our spend on production is in our county of Cornwall, with the remaining 20% still within the UK.



Examples: Horizon screen and Arris chair.

The Horizon screen is an example of a product that is manufactured entirely in one factory, using a single joinery process. Our partner Rozen furniture makes these. They are located on the Lizard peninsula, an area with very little skilled work. The factory make in batches to balance the problems associated with seasonal work and unemployment in the area. The Arris chair by contrast has a variety of components. The wooden frame is made on the Lizard, the cushion outers in Ponsanooth in rural Cornwall, and the webbing and assembly in Penryn. All locations are within a 10 mile radius. Only the cushion inners are made further afield – in the North East.





2.4 Responsible Sourcing

We work with all our partners and suppliers to ensure our materials are sourced in the most sustainable way possible.

Finishing

Chemicals used in furniture finishes can have significant environmental impacts such as pollution of air, ground and water, use of fossil derived resources and use of water resources. We use three main finishes which are selected as having environmental benefits over the alternatives:

1. Galvanising

We use galvanising as a pre-treatment for our outdoor steel products. Galvanising is the process of applying zinc to mild steel to provide it with a strong and protective coating that lasts for up to 100 years. Zinc is an abundant non-toxic metal and can be recycled indefinitely without losing any physical or chemical properties. Importantly, galvanized coatings are recyclable, giving the steel an almost continuous life span.

2. Powder Coating

We use powder coating for all our painted metal furniture. Powder coating offers clear environmental advantages to the alternative solvent-borne liquid paint finishes. Less hazardous waste is emitted, with no release of VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds) which are hazardous to human health.

One application is required to gain the average thickness for a coating compared to the two or three that would be necessary for a liquid paint. Therefore not only is the amount of paint required less but excess powder or overspray can be collected and recycled so there is no waste. This is particularly important for a product such as the Net chair or Six coatstand which would generate 60-70% waste if wet sprayed.

The powder coating process uses a solvent free mix of plastic resins, pigments, and fillers. It is a long lasting finish, and at the end of life is easily removed in the steel recycling process.

3. Timber finishing

We only use oiled finishes on our timber furniture. We believe this offers a superior, deeper finish to the more common lacquered finishes. It also has environmental advantages. Our finishing oil is derived from plant parts and is a penetrating finish that seeps into the wood pores rather than building a protective film on the surface of the wood. Oiled finishes are more forgiving of scratches and can be easily reapplied over the life of an item.

Timber

With one exception we use only temperate hardwoods from sustainable forestry in Europe and North America. The exception is the Iroko we use in our outdoor Wave tables. This is a tropical hardwood for which we have an FSC certified supply.

Steel

Net chairs and Six coat stands are made from mild steel with a minimum 87% recycled content (average 95%).



Textiles

We recommend only upholstery fabrics from reputable suppliers that take their environmental responsibilities seriously. Of our three main suppliers, two are UK companies who manufacture in the UK. The third is a Danish company who also manufacture many of their woolen fabrics in UK mills.

Filling materials

Where possible we use natural alternatives such as feather and cotton wadding as an alternative to polyurethane foam (for example the Arris Chair). Foam is used widely in the industry, but we are seeking to reduce our reliance on it as it is an oil-derived and non-recyclable material. Although cotton is a natural material, it has a very high water and energy footprint, and usually the product of intensive agriculture. We therefore use some polyester as an alternative filling material. Although an oil-derived material, this is fully recyclable.

As founders of MARK Product, Anna Hart and John Miller are committed to the principles set out within this sustainability statement.

If you require any further information on specific products please contact us directly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Hart'.

ANNA HART

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Miller'.

JOHN MILLER