

Wall-building element system and building element for use in the system

According to a first aspect, the present invention relates to a wall-building element system as indicated by the preamble of claim 1. According to another aspect, the present invention relates
5 to a basic wall-building element or module as defined by the preamble of claim 5, said wall basic building element constituting a vital part of the wall-building element system according to the first aspect of the invention.

Background

In many situations there is a need to raise buildings quickly and in an inexpensive manner, that
10 being for temporary use or for permanent use. Such situations may be related to refugees' camps, major disaster situations like earthquakes or tsunamis, but also situations of less urgency, such as improving building quality in poor regions.

On the other hand, plastic waste material has become a large and growing environmental problem on shore and off shore. An ideal situation would be to solve the first mentioned problems by using
15 the waste material constituting the second mentioned problem as a raw material.

The present invention sets out to do just that, to find use for plastic waste material as a raw material in a wall-building element system that allows buildings of a decent and reliable standard to be assembled in a minimum of time.

Many modular building systems are known, primarily based on conventional materials and suitable
20 as permanent buildings like apartment buildings or residential houses of high standard. On the other end of the scale, tents and modular building systems based on standard containers have been suggested.

US 2014/0059 961 A1 teaches thermally insulated composite panels comprising layers of non-combustible, cement based material and a core of insulating material.

25 US 2009/0205 277 A1 describes a panel system of five layers, with a centre plate layer, insulating layers on both sides of the centre layer and outer plate layers again to cover the exterior sides of the insulating layers.

WO 2004/076764 A1 teaches a wall or ceiling element comprising outer plate shaped layers of wood surrounding a layer of foamed polystyrene.

A more complex building block is described in EP 2966235 A1, comprising a centre insulating layer, plate layers and longitudinally extending reinforcement elements.

The present invention is different from the prior art building elements in problem approach as well as with regard to the technicalities.

5 **The present invention**

According to a first aspect the present invention relates to a wall-building element system as defined by claim 1.

According to a second aspect, the present invention relates to a prefabricated wall-building element or module as defined by claim 5.

10 Preferred embodiments of the present invention are disclosed by the dependent claims.

With the wall-building element system according to the present invention, temporary or permanent buildings may be raised quickly and at a low cost on any flat surface. The main component of the building system is a wall-building element comprising a load bearing central core, typically made of a rigid synthetic material, preferably recycle or waste plastic material or a
15 composite product including such plastic material, plywood or the like. The wall-building element further comprises form-stable layers of thermally insulating materials preferably made of foamed recycled or waste plastic material. These elements are adapted to be combined with similar elements horizontally and vertically to thereby construct a wall. 'Between each horizontal layer of these wall-building elements specially adapted H-profiled beams or rails are arranged to transfer
20 load in a safe and reliable manner in a vertical direction. These H-beams are specifically adapted to the top side surface and the bottom side surface of the wall-building elements to ensure that the vertical forces are correctly transferred from level to level of the core member of each wall-building element and to ensure that there is no overload of the comparatively weaker, though substantially rigid, thermal insulation layer of the wall-building elements.

25 A complete building will always comprise at least one outer door and typically, but not necessarily, a number of windows. Windows and doors may generally be adapted to a building raised according to the principles of the present invention, in one of two alternative ways. One way is to cut out the required opening, typically using an electric sawing/ cutting machine and to put in a door or a window, including frame, more or less of a standard type. The frame of a window assembled in a
30 basic wall-building element in such a manner, could be provided with a lower beam, in wood, metal or synthetic material, having a profile corresponding to the lowermost side edge of a wall-building

element, adapted to be mounted on top of a section of an H-beam according to the present invention. Similarly, the uppermost side edge of the window frame may have profile like the top side edge of a wall-building element, hence being adapted to the lowermost part of the H-beam being part of the present system. In such a case, the lower and the upper sides of the cut out opening may be provided with an H-beam before assembly. This allows the window/ frame, once assembled in a wall, to become part of the load bearing structure of the wall, if the window frame has an adequate load bearing capacity.

Another way of adapting doors and windows to the present invention, is to include production elements with the same dimensions as any other basic wall-building elements, in which a door frame or a window frame is included already as a prefabricated element, ensuring that the end user does neither need to perform any cutting nor any kind of adaptation during assembly of a building. On the other hand, this alternative requires a higher number of alternative building elements, in particular if the end user shall be allowed to choose between different window and/or door sizes. While assembly of doors and windows are required operations during assembly of a building, the manner in which it is made is not as such an element of the present invention and therefore not discussed in further detail herein.

The form-stable layer of insulation material will typically exhibit properties including UV resistance and moisture resistance, and may be supplied with a polymer coating of UV resistant and/ or moisture resistant material at the exterior side of the basic wall-building element to ensure long lasting properties with regard to resistance against moisture and sunlight.

While the specific materials for the load bearing core member and for the thermal insulation layers may vary, typically both are comprised by recycle plastic materials. The material for the thermal insulation layers is foamed to a desired density without jeopardizing its form stability. In commercial buildings it is estimated that about 60 % of the materials used will be recycle plastic materials.

The thermally insulating material is typically rich in polyethylene (PE). Other plastic materials may also be used but the ones mentioned are preferred also due to their availability in vast amounts. The thermal insulation layers are foamed to a high degree and may have a density about 28 kg/m³ (less than 3 % of the density of water). The expanded – or foamed – polyethylene of such a density still is form-stable and well functioning for the purpose of the present invention.

Materials of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) may also be useful in relation to the present invention, such as for rooftops and the like, not however as such covered by the present invention.

The load bearing core member may typically be comprised by a material selected from the group consisting of honeycomb polymer structure, preferably including recycled polymer material, composite materials, plywood, or a combination thereof and having a density typically around 80-130 kg/m³, i.e. still a density in the range 8-13 % of the density of water. The load bearing capacity
5 in terms of compressive modulus as defined by ASTM C365-57 has been found to be about 20MPa (about 200 atm). The polymers for the load bearing core member typically comprises at least one of polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET), the latter typically used just as a coating material.

With a convenient element thickness, the specific weight of the basic wall-building element
10 according to the present invention typically is in the range 25 – 30 kg/m². While it might be assumed that such a light construction would be vulnerable for damage in strong winds, tests have shown that buildings raised in accordance with the present invention are surprisingly stable. This is believed to be due to way in which all the elements engage with other elements. In addition, the buildings are stabilized by the roof structure that closes the building and binds the walls together,
15 preventing winds from getting inside. The roof structure is, however, not part of the present invention and therefore not described in any detail here. Any conventional roof structure may be used for providing a roof for the wall-building elements of the present invention.

The square dimensions of the basic wall-building elements according to the present invention may vary within wide limits dependent upon type of building, location, available means for
20 transportation and assembly etc. For instance, in situations where cranes or the like are not available for lifting and positioning the elements to their intended positions and orientations, the elements should preferably not be larger than allowing manual handling by two people. One element could have a height corresponding to a floor, e.g. 2.4 meters. If such an element has a width of 1.2 meter, its square dimension is 2.9 meters and its weight near 75 kg (assuming a specific
25 weight of 25 kg/ m². Two people would quite easily be able to raise and assemble elements of such a weight.

Figures

Figure 1a is a schematic top view of two basic wall-building elements according to an embodiment of the present invention in a state not yet assembled,
30 Figure 1b is a schematic top view of the two basic wall-building elements from Figure 1 as assembled,

Figure 2 is a schematic top view of two basic wall-building elements according to an embodiment of the invention slightly different from the one shown in Figures 1a and 1b, in a state not yet assembled,

Figure 3a is a schematic side short end view of two basic wall-building elements according to the present invention, one above the other, not assembled.

Figure 3b is an enlargement of a part of Figure 3a

Figure 3c is a schematic side end view of the elements shown in Figure 3a, assembled.

Figure 4a is a schematic top view of an entire basic wall-building element as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 4b is a schematic top view of a preferred embodiment of a basic wall-building element.

Figure 4c is a schematic top view of another preferred embodiment of a basic wall-building element.

Figure 4d is a schematic top view of yet another preferred embodiment of a basic wall-building element.

Figure 5a is a side sectional view of the basic wall-building element shown in Figure 4d.

Figure 5b is a side sectional view of a variant of the basic wall-building element shown in Figure 4d.

Figure 6a is a schematic side end view of a basic wall-building element and a sole element.

Figure 6b is a schematic side end view of a slightly different sole element.

Figure 6c is a schematic side end view of a yet a variant of the sole element.

Figure 7 is a schematic side end view of an assembled wall structure according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 8 is a schematic side end view of an assembled wall structure according to another embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 1a shows schematically end sections of two wall-building elements 11 according to an embodiment of the present invention, the right-most part of one element and the left-most part of an adjacent similar element. Each element has a core member 12, which is the load-carrying element, and on both sides thereof, a thermal insulation layer 13. The core member is made in a material with a compressive strength sufficient to take up all vertical forces applied when the elements are assembled to complete walls and a roof being put on top of the walls. The thermal insulation layer 13 is preferably made from recycled plastic materials, which are subsequently foamed to a density beyond a minimum density level. The thermal insulation layer exhibits integrity in the sense that it is rigid and dimensionally stable.

At one short side of the wall-building element, shown as the right part of the left-most element in Figure 1a, the core members protrudes from the thermal insulation layer, thereby forming a tongue 12a. At the other side of the wall-building element, shown as the left part of the right-most element in Figure 1, the core member 12 is recessed as compared to the thermal insulation layer
5 13, thereby forming a groove 12b of a width adapted to the width of the load bearing core member 12.

As illustrated by Fig.1b, the elements may be assembled in accordance with a tongue and groove principle in the lateral direction, due also to the inherent rigidity and dimension stability of the thermal insulation layer.

10 Figure 2 shows schematically a top view of an embodiment of the wall-building element according to the present invention which is rather similar to the one shown in Figures 1a and 1b, the sole difference being that the thermal insulation layer 13 at both sides of the groove 12b, is tapered 13b to allow easy assembly of the wall-building elements.

Figure 3a shows schematically a side view of parts of two wall-building elements in accordance
15 with an embodiment of the present invention, similar with or equal to the one shown in Figures 1a, 1b. The view is from the short end of each element, which is with the largest horizontal extension of the elements perpendicular to the paper plane.

At both sides of the top edge of the core member 12 and adjacent thereto, the thermal insulation layer 13 exhibits recessed regions 13a. In these recessed regions 13a, the thermal insulation layer
20 is recessed as compared to the level of the insulation layer farther away from the core member 12 and it is recessed also when compared with the core member 12.

A similar recessed region 13c is shown at the bottom of the upper element. Figure 3a also illustrates the fact that the load bearing core member 12 extends vertically above the recessed region 13a but not quite to the top level of the thermal insulation layer 13.

25 An H-shaped beam 14 is used to connect the upper wall building element to the one below.

Figure 3b is an enlargement of details encircled in Figure 3a. The level differences mentioned above are seen more clearly in Figure 3b. The three levels at the top of the wall-building elements are shown namely the top level L13 of the thermal insulation layer, the top level L12 of the load bearing core member 12 and the level L13a of the recessed region 13a of the thermal insulation layer 13.
30 It is understood that the horizontal part of the H shaped beam 14 has a width or thickness that is

about twice the level difference between levels L13 and L12 while the vertical extension of the H shaped beam is about twice the difference between the levels L13 and L13a.

Similarly, at the bottom of each wall-building element 11, the load bearing core member 12 extends below the recessed region 13c of the thermal insulation layer 13 but not quite to the
5 lowermost level of the thermal insulation layer.

The wall-building element system according to one aspect of the present invention comprises two additional components one being an H-shaped beam or rail 14 adapted to fit between different vertical layers of wall-building elements 11. The dimension of the H-shaped beam are adapted to the dimensions of the recessed regions 13a, 13c, and to the level difference between the top of
10 the load bearing core member 12 and the top level of the thermal insulation layer 13.

Figure 3c is a side view of the elements shown in Fig. 3a in assembled position, using the H-beam 14 as a stabilizing and load-transferring member between the layers. The H beam may be made in any strong, stable material. Typically, the H shaped beam 14 is made of light metal, composite materials or compact plastic material, with a density and compressive strength much higher than
15 the thermal insulation layer and at least comparable with the density and compressive strength of the core member 12. The length of each H beam 14 may be different from the horizontal extension of the wall-building elements and the joints between the different H beam elements are typically positioned so as not to coincide with the joints between the wall-building elements. While the thermal insulation layer has an integrity and dimension stability in itself, the presence of the H
20 shaped beams between each layer of wall-building elements still significantly enhances the stability of the complete, assembled building structure.

Figure 4a shows a top view of an entire wall-building element similar to the ones shown in part in Figure 2.

Figure 4b shows schematically a top view of a preferred embodiment of a wall-building element
25 according to the present invention. The difference from the embodiment shown in Figure 4a is that the core member 12 exhibits lateral ribs 121 extending from both sides of the plate shaped main body 120 of the core member 12. The main body 120 and the ribs are typically casted as a single integrated structure and the vertical extension thereof is typically the same as the main body 120 with the exception that in the recessed region 13c of the thermal insulation, the vertical level of
30 the ribs 121 typically coincide with the vertical level L13a of the thermal insulation layer 13 in the recessed region. Thereby the ribs 121 are allowed to support the beams 14 directly from underneath.

Figure 4c shows schematically a slightly different variant of the wall-building element compared to the one shown in Figure 4b, the only difference being an increased number of ribs 121 extending from the main body 120 of the core member.

Figure 4d shows yet another variant in which the ribs are arranged symmetrically on both sides of
5 the main body 120 of the core member.

The ribs shown in Figures 4b-4c have several functions. They serve to make the core members 12 more rigid and twist-resistant, they serve to support and stabilize the thermal insulation layer and, in interaction with the H-shaped beams 14, they serve to distribute the forces transferred between the vertical layers of the structure over a larger area. In addition, as elaborated below, they serve
10 to stabilize the different vertical layers of an assembled wall structure even with regard to lateral forces.

Preferably, the ribs 121 are arranged in a fixed pattern, equally spaced and all ribs arranged in parallel with one another. The longitudinal direction is typically vertical and perpendicular to the main body 120 of the core member 12. The lateral extension is typically a little less than the
15 thickness of the thermal insulation layer 13, thereby allowing the thermal insulation layer to fully cover the ribs and at the same time allowing the thermal insulation layer to be applied as one continuous element rather than a number of smaller elements separated by ribs.

Figure 5a is a side sectional view along the line V-V in Figure 4d, and generally illustrates the extension of the ribs 121 in relation to or comparison with the thermal insulation layer 13. In the
20 recessed region 13a, it is essential that the ribs allow room for the H-shaped beam 14 and therefore exhibit flat areas corresponding to (at least) the width of the recessed region 13a of the thermal insulation layer 13. By following the upwards 90 degrees angle of the thermal insulation layer 13 at the imaginary line along the outermost side of the recessed region 13a, the ribs provide support for the H-beam even laterally, thereby contributing to the stability of the assembled structure also
25 with regard to lateral forces between the vertical layers thereof.

Figure 5b shows a slightly different variant from the one shown in Figure 5a, the difference being that the upwards angle of the ribs 121 at the bending line along the outer side of the recessed region 13a, is somewhat larger than 90 degrees, making it slightly easier to fit the H-beam into the recessed region 13a while still providing lateral support.

30 While the profiles of the ribs 121 shown in Figure 5a and 5b are based on Figure 4d, the ribs indicated in Figures 4b and 4c will typically have similar profiles, contributing to the stabilization of

the complete structure when assembled with H-shaped beams 14 between each vertical layer of the wall structure.

Reference is now made to Figure 6a. Beneath the lowermost vertical row of wall-building element 11, a particular sole element 15 is used, the top of which being provided with a profile adapted to the bottom surface of the wall-building elements. The upper surface of the sole element 15 thus exhibits extending flanges 15a, which fits into the recessed region 13c of wall-building element with a groove 15b there-between to allow space for the lower end of the core member, or more specifically, the main body thereof. The width of the sole element is adapted to the width of the wall-building elements, i.e. the sole element is typically as wide as – or somewhat wider than – the wall-building elements.

Figure 6b shows a variant of the sole element 15, the difference being that the lower surface is corrugated to slightly penetrate the ground on which it is placed. Figure 6c shows yet a variant where the lower surface is provided with long spikes to more deeply penetrate the ground.

Figure 7 shows a view an assembled wall structure as seen from the short end of the wall-building elements. The wall structure consists of a bottom sole element 15 and three layers of wall-building elements 11 joined via H-shaped beams 14. Figure 7 illustrates the fact that the ribs (shaded area) surrounds the H-beams from below and from above, thereby stabilizing the wall structure laterally while transferring the weight load via the H-beams vertically.

Figure 7 also indicates the presence of a roof which, however is not part of the present invention.

The number of floors are not indicated in Figure 7. The height covered by the three elements on top of one another may correspond to one or more floors. When more than one floor is encountered, floor supporting elements (not shown) such as pillars, bars and/ or beams (not shown) would typically be present since the wall structure according to the present invention is not designed to support floors.

Figure 8 shows a variation of the wall shown in Figure 7, the differences being that the wall elements are relatively higher but also that the upper and lower edges of the exterior side of the thermal insulation layer 13 are designed with an inclination 131 preventing water from penetrating the wall during rainfall.

Additional features and embodiments

The basic wall-building elements are typically symmetrical around the central load-bearing core, with the possible exception of a particular layer of UV resistant and/ or moisture resistant material at its exterior side. In the drawings 1-7, all basic wall-building elements are shown as symmetrical
5 in this respect.

While the exterior and the interior side of the wall-building elements may be identical to one another, there is also the possibility of providing at least one extra layer on the exterior side, to better protect against humidity and/ or deterioration by sunlight.

While the wall-building elements according to the present invention is suitable for assembly of
10 complete buildings, with the exception of a roof, the elements may also be used for providing thermal insulation in existing buildings.

For assembly in an already existing building, as a building within a building or as thermal insulation in an existing building, the basic wall-building element may assume a simpler design wherein a thermal insulation layer is provided at only one side of the core member. This allows the assembly
15 of lighter elements which still provides a required degree of thermal insulation but which does not need to exhibit the same level of load bearing capacity, in particular since the inner wall made thereof will not be carrying an outer roof.

Claims

1. Wall-building element system comprising
 - sole elements (15) adapted to be assembled to a sole arranged to support insulated wall-building elements,
- 5 - basic wall-building elements (11) adapted to be assembled horizontally and vertically to a wall, and
 - beams (14) adapted to be fitted between each horizontal layer of the basic wall-building elements (11),
- characterized in that
- 10 - the sole elements (15) have a width that is adapted to the width of the basic wall-building elements (11), and a top profile that is adapted to the bottom side of the basic wall-building elements (11),
 - the basic wall-building elements (11) are prefabricated with a central, load bearing core member (12) and form-stable layers of thermal insulation (13) on both sides thereof, the thermal
 - 15 insulation layer exhibiting a linear recessed region (13a) extending along each side of the core member's top side and a linear recessed region (13c) extending along each side of the core member's bottom side, the core member's (12) top 12c and bottom edges 12d protruding from said recessed level of the thermal insulation layer to a level between the recessed level (L13a) of the thermal insulation layer and the non-recessed level (L13) of the thermal insulation layer,
 - 20 while along one vertical side of each basic wall-building element the core member (12) protrudes to constitute a tongue (12a) while along the opposite side of the basic wall-building element, the core member (12) is recessed to constitute a groove (12b) adapted to receive the tongue (12a) of the adjacent wall-building element, while
 - the beams (14) have an "H" profile with a width adapted to the total width of the linear
 - 25 recessed region (13a) along both sides of the core member and a height adapted to the combined height of the top recessed region (13a) and the bottom recessed region (13c) of the wall-building elements (11).
2. Wall-building element system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the core member (12) comprises a plate shaped main body (120) provided with laterally extending, vertically oriented ribs (121).
- 30 3. Wall-building element system as claimed in claim 2, wherein each of the ribs (121) has an upper edge that coincides with the level (L13a) of the recessed region (13a).

4. Wall-building element system as claimed in any one of claim 1 - 3, wherein each of the ribs (121) has an upward bend along the imaginary lines at the outermost ends of the recessed (13a) regions.
5. Prefabricated basic wall-building element (11) comprising a load bearing core member (12) comprising a plate shape main body (120) having a vertical orientation in its assembled position, said main body (120) being covered by and attached to, directly or indirectly, a thermal insulation layer (13) at least at one side thereof, **characterized in** that the core member (12) further comprises ribs (121) extending laterally from the main body (120), with a vertical orientation, their lateral extension being less than the thickness of the thermal insulation layer (13).
- 10 6. Prefabricated wall-building element (11) as claimed in claim 5, further comprising thermal insulation layers (13) at both sides of the main body (120) of the load bearing core member (12).
7. Prefabricated wall-building element (11) as claimed in claim 5 or 6, further comprising ribs (121) extending laterally from both sides of the main body (120) of the load bearing core member (12).
8. Prefabricated wall-building element (11) as claimed in any one of claims 5-7, wherein the thermal
15 insulation layer (13) is made of a dimensionally stable material.
9. Prefabricated wall-building element (11) as claimed in claim 8, wherein the plate shaped main body (120) of the core member (12) extends vertically from linear recessed areas of the thermal insulation layer (13) along both sides of the core member (12).
10. Prefabricated wall-building element (11) as claimed in any one of claims 5-9, wherein the
20 thermal insulation layer(13) is made of foamed, recycle plastic material having a density of 25-35 kg/m³, such as 28 kg/m³.
11. Prefabricated wall-building element (11) as claimed in any one of claims 5-10, wherein the load bearing core member (12) has a density in the range 80-130 kg/m³ and mainly comprises a material selected from the group consisting of honeycomb polymer structure, preferably including recycled
25 polymer material, composite materials, plywood, or a combination thereof.
12. Prefabricated wall-building element (11) as claimed in any one of claims 5-10, wherein the upper and lower edges of the exterior side of the thermal insulation layer (13) are designed with an inclination 131.