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PROJECTS



This house in Kensal Green, London, makes good use of natural materials. Turn to page 89 for more healthy homes

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Build for wellbeing

Ideas for new-build or renovation projects that foster good health

WORDS CAROLINE RODRIGUES



ABOVE Designed by Sarah Wigglesworth Architects, this sustainable three-bedroom house was built on an infill site in Kensal Green, London. See more of the project overleaf

Designers and architects are championing homes that have a positive impact on our mental and physical health. 'Designing for wellbeing is not something you add on at the end,' says architect Ben Channon, director at Ekkist (ekjist.co). 'It affects every decision, from where you place a house on the

site to which tile adhesive you use.' When planning a renovation or new-build, Ben recommends creating a relationship with nature. 'This doesn't just mean adding plants, it could also involve bringing in daylight, creating views out to landscapes, water, or the sky, or using natural materials,' he says. >>

Avoid chemical nasties

Natural building materials with low embodied energy – ideally produced ethically and transported short distances – are beneficial from both a sustainability and a health perspective. Options include sustainably sourced timber, stone, cob and clay brick.

Using reclaimed materials will also keep a building's embodied carbon footprint extremely low. But be aware that reclaimed items which have been treated or painted may release potentially harmful chemicals into the air, so use trusted suppliers or materials in their natural state.

Using reclaimed materials will keep a building's embodied carbon footprint extremely low

'Fired bricks and clay tiles are easy to reuse, they don't contain nasty chemicals, plus they are energy intensive to make new,' says Janna Laan Lomas, founding director at Grain Architecture (grainarchitecture.co.uk).

RIGHT AND BELOW This single-level house takes into account the needs of the owner, his mother, partner and son. The brief was for a healthy-living home using natural materials and with a low-maintenance garden that would become a habitat for wildlife. Sarah Wigglesworth Architects designed the £600,000 project on Passivhaus principles, with a highly airtight construction and an MVHR system (swarch.co.uk)

