GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE™

BUILD WELL TO LIVE WELL CASE STUDIES

VOLUME 1: UNITED STATES & UNITED KINGDOM

September 2025











ALDAR

Strategic Partner of the Global Wellness Institute

GLOBALWELLNESSINSTITUTE.ORG

GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE™

EMPOWERING WELLNESS WORLDWIDE

Build Well to Live Well: Case Studies

VOLUME 1: UNITED STATES & UNITED KINGDOM

SEPTEMBER 2025

Strategic Partner of the Global Wellness Institute

ALDAR

Suggested citation:

Yeung, O., and Johnston, K. (2025). *Build Well to Live Well: Case Studies, Volume 1*. Miami, FL: Global Wellness Institute. https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/2025-build-well-to-live-well-case-studies/

All photos not specifically attributed were taken by the authors.

For more information, contact research@globalwellnessinstitute.org or visit www.globalwellnessinstitute.org.

About the Global Wellness Institute

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is considered the leading global research and educational resource for the global wellness industry and is known for introducing major industry initiatives and regional events that bring together leaders and visionaries to chart the future. GWI positively impacts global health and wellness by advocating for both public institutions and businesses that are working to help prevent disease, reduce stress, and enhance overall quality of life. Its mission is to empower wellness worldwide.

www.globalwellnessinstitute.org

About the Authors

Build Well to Live Well: Case Studies, Volume 1 was prepared by Ophelia Yeung and Katherine Johnston. As GWI's principal researchers, they have defined and measured the size of the global wellness economy and its sectors over the last eighteen years. Together, they bring more than five decades of experience conducting research and strategy development for countries, regions, industry consortia, companies, and non-profit institutions around the world. They also co-authored the companion GWI report, *Build Well to Live Well: The Future*, June 2025.

GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE

Wellness Real Estate Resources

Wellness Real Estate Market Size Data

Updated market size data for the wellness real estate sector (global, regional, and country-level numbers) are published each year in GWI's ***Global Wellness Economy Monitor***. For the latest data, see: https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/the-global-wellness-economy/.

Wellness Real Estate In-Depth Analysis

GWI's 2025 ***Build Well to Live Well*** is a multi-part series:

- ***Build Well to Live Well: The Future***: https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/2025-build-well-to-live-well-wellness-real-estate-communities/
- ***Build Well to Live Well: Case Studies, Volume 1 (United States & United Kingdom)*** (this volume)
- ***Build Well to Live Well: Case Studies, Volume 2*** (forthcoming in 2026)

GWI's first report on Wellness Real Estate, ***Build Well to Live Well***, was published in 2018. See: https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/wellness-real-estate-communities-research/.

GWI's 2020 White Paper, ***Resetting the World With Wellness: Healthy Built Environments for Healthy People***, describes how our unhealthy built environment can cause both chronic and infectious diseases like COVID-19, and it elaborates on the roles that communities, businesses and governments can play in building healthier homes and communities for healthier people. See: https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/resetting-the-world-with-wellness/.

Wellness Policy Toolkits

GWI's ***Wellness Policy Series*** is a compilation of nine reports, which aim to define wellness policy, articulate why it is needed, and provide a framework and set of strategies for implementing wellness policies across many domains of wellness. For more information, see: https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wellness-policy-series/.

- Three policy toolkits have already been released, and each one addresses some aspects of the built environment: ***Physical Activity Toolkit*** (2023), ***Wellness In Tourism Toolkit*** (2024), and ***Mental Wellness Toolkit*** (2024).
- A policy toolkit on ***Wellness in the Built Environment*** will be released in the future.

GWI Initiatives

GWI hosts two industry-led initiatives related to wellness real estate and the built environment. These are led by industry thought leaders, and they release their own white papers, trend reports, webinars, and other resources. For more information, see:

- **Wellness Communities & Real Estate Initiative:** https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/initiatives/wellness-communities-real-estate-initiative/
- **Wellness Architecture & Design Initiative:** https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/initiatives/wellness-architecture-design-initiative/

Contents

Background: Understanding Wellness Real Estate	**i**
Introduction and Key Takeaways from the Case Studies	**1**
Case Study Methodology and Format	**5**
Summary of the Featured Projects	**7**
United States	
American Cancer Society Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation Hope Lodge© (Texas)	13
Fox Point Farms (California)	19
Rancho Mission Viejo (California)	25
Rockaway Village (New York)	33
Spring Creek Towers (New York)	39
The Mather, Tysons (Virginia)	49
The Pearl (Maryland)	55
The Picket Fence Concept Home (Pennsylvania)	63
United Kingdom	
Barclays Bank Campus, Buchanan Wharf (Glasgow)	71
Brent Cross Town (London)	79
Daphne Steele Building, University of Huddersfield National Health Innovation Campus (Huddersfield)	87
The Spine (Liverpool)	93
Urbanest Battersea Student Accommodations (London)	99
Acknowledgements	**105**
Strategic Partner	**107**

Background: Understanding Wellness Real Estate

Why does wellness real estate matter?

The built environment is the next frontier and the greatest future opportunity for wellness. Our built environments have a profound influence on our health and well-being (an impact that is often negative), and these impacts have become more obvious since the COVID-19 pandemic. The rise of wellness as a dominant consumer value is driving trillions of dollars of spending across every product and service category, and wellness real estate was estimated by GWI at $548.4 billion in 2024. Worldwide, nearly 15% of GDP (or over $16.5 trillion in 2024) is spent on construction every year, building our workplaces, homes, schools, hospitals, roads, and infrastructure. Housing is one of the largest household expenditures worldwide (representing about 20% of all global consumer spending, or $12 trillion in 2024) in addition to being our biggest financial investment. It is only logical that what we build should also be an investment in our health and well-being.

The Wellness Case

The built environment is an essential foundation for building healthy lives. At its best, wellness real estate can minimize the environmental impacts on our health, support healthier behaviors and lifestyles, and improve access to wellness infrastructure for the most vulnerable populations. Occupants of wellness real estate projects have reported many positive impacts, including: more physical activity, better sleep, lower rates of chronic disease, reduced hospital admissions, reduced symptoms of asthma, reduced sick days at work, lower crime rates, more time spent in nature, improved self-reported well-being, better memory and cognitive function, more interactions with neighbors, and a greater sense of belonging and connection.

The Business Case

Wellness real estate not only improves its occupants' health and well-being, but is also good for the bottom line. Developers, investors, owners, consumers, and occupants have demonstrated a strong interest in wellness real estate and the willingness to pay for it. Wellness-focused residential properties can command a price premium of 10-25% (for properties positioned at the middle and upper ends of the market), while commercial buildings have demonstrated a 4.4-7.7% rental premium per square foot. For most developers and companies, the motivation for and value of investing in wellness real estate comes not from short-term financial payoffs, but rather from the intangible, longer-term market value of "doing the right thing" for occupants/users. Many other economic benefits have been documented by wellness real estate projects, including: faster sales, longer leasing terms, lower turnover, higher tenant/resident satisfaction, and higher asset values. In commercial real estate, wellness features support higher employee productivity and performance; reduced absenteeism and presenteeism; and improved retention and recruitment.

What Is wellness real estate and how do you build it?

The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness real estate as:
Built environments proactively designed, built, and operated to support the holistic health of occupants, visitors, and the community.

Six Dimensions of Wellness Real Estate

Wellness real estate projects must be designed and built in a manner that facilitates and optimizes their occupants' health and well-being across multiple dimensions of wellness. Many different design features, infrastructure, amenities, and services can be used to support each dimension.

Physical
- Movement & exercise
- Food & nutrition
- Prevention & healthcare
- Environmental exposures & comfort
- Mobility & accessibility
- Safety & Security

Mental & Spiritual
- Nature
- Rest, solace, & sleep
- Spiritual traditions, purpose, & meaning
- Beauty, awe, & delight
- Designed to reduce daily friction
- Work-life balance & lifelong learning

Social
- Prosocial design
- Diverse & integrated housing
- Spaces for socializing & connecting
- Tech-based connectivity

Economic & Financial
- Affordability & equity
- Lower transit costs
- Access to education
- Access to employment
- Entrepreneurial support

Environmental
- Building technologies & methods
- Earth-friendly & climate adaptive
- Energy practices
- Water & waste practices
- Biodiversity

Civic & Community
- Local history, heritage, & culture
- Inclusion & diversity
- Openness & public services
- Engagement, participation, & governance
- Regeneration & renewal

Source: Global Wellness Institute

Six Guiding Principles for Wellness Real Estate

We outline six key principles that can be used to guide the development of wellness real estate from the ground up. These principles encourage developers and builders to think holistically about how health and wellness can be addressed and supported across every aspect of the development process.

1. **From small to large scale:** Wellness can be incorporated into any size, scale, and type of building or project, and at any price point.
2. **From intentional to multidimensional:** Wellness real estate should be intentional, starting at the early stage of the planning process; it should use a multidimensional and holistic approach.
3. **From "do no harm" to optimizing wellness:** Our built environments should not be unhealthy or unsafe; they can also leave us feeling better than before we entered them.
4. **From passive to active wellness:** Our built environments can affect our health simply by existing within a space; they can also encourage the proactive behaviors that drive wellness.
5. **From infrastructure to operations:** Wellness should be embedded in the infrastructure and not just an amenity; it should also be activated through ongoing operations and programming.
6. **From "me" to "we":** Apart from catering to individual wellness needs, wellness real estate recognizes that connections and community are central to our well-being.

Innovating the future of wellness real estate.

There are many unmet needs across the world, which present important opportunities for ongoing development in the wellness real estate market. With new thinking, creativity, and innovations in addressing these global, macro-level challenges and themes, wellness real estate can provide wider benefits to more people and meet the needs of the future.

- **Climate adaptation and resilience.**
- **Earth-friendly and sustainable living.**
- **Innovations to improve the construction process and home supply.**
- **Healthy homes for the non-rich.**
- **Wellness-centric urban regeneration.**
- **From healthcare clusters to healthy communities.**
- **Improving healthspans and thriving in aging.**
- **Diversifying co-living models.**
- **Building healthier food environments.**
- **Embracing the benefits of nature.**
- **Improving sensory environments with neuroarchitecture and the arts.**
- **Infusing wellness into travel and tourism infrastructure.**

Note that the content presented in this section is condensed from GWI's June 2025 report, *Build Well to Live Well: The Future* (which is a companion to this report). For a more in-depth discussion of these topics, see the full report at: https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/2025-build-well-to-live-well-wellness-real-estate-communities/.

Introduction and Key Takeaways from the Case Studies

Build Well to Live Well: Case Studies, Volume 1 is a companion report to *Build Well To Live Well: The Future*, which was released by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) in June 2025.[1] This volume – more than eighteen months in the making – presents **thirteen case studies** that illustrate a wide range of wellness real estate projects **across the United States and the United Kingdom**. We chose to profile these projects because they represent the breadth and depth of the wellness real estate market, **showing how wellness-focused projects can be implemented on any scale (from a single home to an entire neighborhood), can meet the needs of diverse occupants, and can be delivered at many price points.** All of the case studies illustrate thoughtful and creative approaches to embedding multidimensional wellness into their design, construction, and operation. In addition, these case studies provide **concrete examples of the major themes and future opportunities for wellness real estate**, which we have highlighted in the main *Build Well to Live Well* report (see summary on *Page iii*). We hope that this collection of exemplary projects will inspire more diverse, creative, and inclusive wellness real estate projects of all kinds in the future.

Key takeaways from this case study volume.

1. The case studies illustrate how wellness real estate is quickly transforming from a niche market to mainstream:

- **Healthy building concepts have expanded into every real estate asset class.** The projects profiled in this report encompass many different types of properties, including residential (single family and multifamily), mixed-use, commercial/office, educational/research, healthcare, and hospitality.
- **Wellness real estate can be built at any scale.** These case studies include properties that range from very small to very large – from a single house (The Picket Fence Concept Home) or a single building (The Pearl, The Spine), to a campus (Barclays Bank Campus), to massive, town-scale mixed-use developments with thousands of residents (Rancho Mission Viejo, Brent Cross Town).
- **In the residential space, wellness real estate is spreading from the luxury market to all price points and demographics.** This case study volume features projects that are delivering healthy built environments for a variety of different populations, including large-scale affordable housing communities (Spring Creek Towers, Rockaway Village), student housing (Urbanest Battersea), and senior living (The Mather Tysons).

[1] *Build Well to Live Well: The Future* is an in-depth exploration of wellness real estate –what is wellness real estate, why we need more of it, how to build and operate it, how big is the market, and how to communicate its business case and its health benefits. See: https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/2025-build-well-to-live-well-wellness-real-estate-communities/.

2. The case studies illustrate how wellness real estate projects are embracing the multidimensional aspects of health and well-being:

- **Healthy indoor air, thermal comfort, opportunities for physical activity, and biophilic elements are becoming a given in wellness real estate projects.** All of the case study projects not only address physical wellness, but also place a very high importance on mental, social, environmental, and other dimensions of wellness via their design and programming, whether they are catering to residents, office workers, health professionals, students, seniors, or cancer patients and their caregivers.
- **Green building and healthy building are increasingly overlapping and becoming inseparable.** More and more projects are seeking dual certifications for both human health and planetary health, including the Daphne Steele Building (WELL+BREEAM), The Pearl (Fitwel+LEED), and Urbanest Battersea (WELL+Passivhaus+BREEAM). All of the case studies, even those that have not sought certifications, include some construction and design elements that address environmental aims in addition to wellness.
- **In wellness real estate, mental wellness is not just about designing a meditation space – it encompasses reducing daily frictions and easing the mental burdens of occupants.** Many people associate mental wellness in real estate with having a dedicated, specially designed meditative garden or yoga pavilion. In reality, mental wellness in the context of the built environment can be as mundane as design features that simply make daily life easier for the residents and occupants of the space. For example, the Daphne Steele Building intentionally used a coherent set of color schemes on its walls and finishings to make it easier for students and visitors to navigate and maintain a sense of place in a large building. The Barclays Bank Campus engaged Scottish Autism to design workspaces that accommodate a wide range of sensory profiles, including neurodivergent individuals, so that all of their employees can select a work environment that meets their unique needs. At The Pearl, reducing daily friction means providing a vending machine for renting small appliances, such as vacuum cleaner and a clothing steamer, so that apartment residents do not have to own and store these tools themselves. At Spring Creek Towers, the property owners aimed to support residents' dignity and well-being by improving operational efficiencies, launching a tech-supported system for handling maintenance requests, and respecting tenants' time and privacy by revamping the interview process for annual income verification (required for government housing subsidies).
- **Wellness real estate can and should take the lead in creating connected communities, because community is an essential dimension of wellness.** All of the featured projects recognize the importance of community and social connections, and they have intentionally avoided creating a "wellness bubble" or a gated enclave. For example, at The Pearl, the grounds surrounding the apartment building include outdoor play/exercise spaces that are open to the public, and they connect seamlessly with open green spaces, a local retail center, and public transit. The Barclays Bank Campus in Glasgow was intentionally designed as an open corporate campus, with a riverside park, a bike path and walking trail winding through its grounds; tree-shaded seated areas; and restaurants, shops, and event spaces that are open to the public. The Mather at Tysons partnered with Fairfax County, Virginia, to create a community wellness center that provides free programming, open to all 50+ residents in the region. All of the residential master-planned developments profiled in this volume offer a wide variety of wellness services, retail outlets, events, activities, commercial spaces, and much more that serve everyone from the surrounding region and not just residents (including Brent Cross Town, Fox Point Farms, Rancho Mission Viejo, and Rockaway Village).

- **Economic/financial wellness is no longer an afterthought in wellness real estate.** It is pointless to talk about wellness real estate when consumers are faced with the rising challenges of economic insecurity and inadequate/unaffordable housing. The featured case studies have all taken economic/financial wellness into consideration. For example, staying at the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge in Houston is free for cancer patients and their caregivers. Rockaway Village and Spring Creek Towers are affordable housing communities with extensive on-site social services to support their residents (from college counseling to job placement and more). As part of the University of Huddersfield National Health Innovation Campus, the Daphne Steele Building is a center for training healthcare professionals and delivering community healthcare services, helping to address health inequities and improve health outcomes in the region. Brent Cross Town and The Pearl are both transit-friendly communities, helping to reduce the financial burden of car ownership for residents. The Picket Fence Concept Home was designed to demonstrate how a home can be built as urban infill on a narrow city lot, delivered via cost-effective volumetric modular construction.

3. There is no one-size-fits all approach in wellness real estate:

- **The most effective wellness real estate projects use intentional, thoughtful, and situational design and operations that consider their occupants' unique wellness needs.** For example, Fox Point Farms leverages its on-site working farm for healthy eating and biophilic benefits, and The Spine uses extensive indoor plants to deliver better air quality and contact with nature. In contrast, the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge in Houston tries to maximize views of nature but does not allow plants inside the building due to the sensitivities of patients undergoing cancer treatments. Similarly, prosocial design looks different for allied health professionals attending classes (Daphne Steele Building), college students living in cohousing (Urbanest Battersea), seniors with more leisure time (The Mather Tysons), multiethnic residents and immigrants from diverse backgrounds (Spring Creek Towers), or young professionals and families with children (Brent Cross Town, Rancho Mission Viejo). At Hope Lodge Houston, prosocial design means making the communal kitchen the social hub and the heart of the community, while at the Barclays Bank Campus, it means opening up the ground level of the main buildings for small business and community usage. For The Picket Fence Concept Home, prosocial design means creating street-facing porches for the two residences within a single townhome structure.
- **Wellness certifications are a useful tool but are not a requirement for wellness real estate projects.** Over half of the case studies in this volume have obtained or are seeking wellness certifications from WELL (Barclays Bank Campus, Daphne Steele Building, The Spine, Urbanest Battersea, The Mather Tysons, Fox Point Farms) and Fitwel (The Pearl, Spring Creek Towers). Developers of the certified projects say they have found the certifications useful in communicating their wellness intentions to stakeholders and identifying evidence-based approaches for healthy built environments. Some have also used the certification process as an ongoing educational tool for encouraging health-enhancing behaviors among residents, workers, and visitors to the spaces.

4. Wellness real estate projects are delivering both business and wellness benefits:

- **Wellness benefits are not often measured, but some projects are finding positive impacts for their residents.** A few of the case studies in this volume have attempted to capture their impacts on residents via surveys and other tools (Rancho Mission Viejo, Brent Cross Town), finding that residents report benefits for their sense of well-being, connection to their community, and other metrics. The Picket Fence Concept Home, which was built as a "living lab," has been able to measure the improvement of indoor air quality for residents by using its two units as control and experimental cases. For some properties, the benefits of wellness features are evident via word-of-mouth and anecdotes (e.g., at The Pearl, residents note that health and wellness features are a factor in their decision to choose the building or extend their lease).
- **Wellness real estate projects are becoming more proactive and bold about communicating their wellness features to current and potential occupants.** As consumer understanding and uptake of wellness has become more mainstream (especially since the pandemic), we are now seeing developers becoming more proactive and overt in using the language of wellness to communicate about their projects, rather than using more "generic" and traditional sales language about livability, quality of life, comfort, etc. Two of the large-scale residential projects featured in this volume (Brent Cross Town and Rancho Mission Viejo) specifically use the different dimensions of wellness – and how their community supports each one – on displays in their sales centers, in their marketing materials, etc. Some projects are using specially commissioned wall art, strategically placed signage, digital displays, newsletters, and other channels to communicate on an ongoing basis with occupants and visitors about healthy features in their buildings (The Spine, The Pearl, Urbanest Battersea, The Mather Tysons). These efforts help spread the impacts of wellness real estate projects by nudging healthier behaviors and raising people's awareness of how our environments affect our health and well-being.
- **Wellness real estate projects are performing strongly from a business perspective, but price premiums are not the primary motivator.** All of the case studies profiled in this volume have achieved a variety of successes and positive returns for their developers/owners, including strong buyer demand, rapid sales rates (for some, all units have been pre-sold, with long waiting lists), very high occupancy rates and lease renewal rates, and high levels of tenant/occupant satisfaction. However, none of the property representatives interviewed said that price premiums were the main motivation for their wellness-centric approaches. Rather, they focus on the value of health and well-being to their target occupants, and they emphasize that wellness is the right thing to do, as well as an important distinguishing characteristic for their properties and their brands.

Case Study Methodology and Format

Case study methodology and selection.

There are thousands of exemplary wellness real estate projects all around the world. In this volume, we chose to focus on examples in the United States and United Kingdom because we had access to those projects during our study period. We had extensive help in identifying promising projects from partners who are leaders in the wellness real estate field – in particular, **Teri Slavik-Tsuyuki**, co-chair of GWI's Wellness Communities and Real Estate Initiative, and colleagues from the **International Well Building Institute** and the **Center for Active Design**. A few projects, like the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge in Houston and Brent Cross Town in London, were discovered by serendipity.

In selecting the case studies, we emphasized a number of factors, including: projects that are already built and in operation; projects where we had access to the developer/owner; projects that we were able to visit in person; projects using varying approaches to certifications; and projects representing different regional contexts, different types and scales of real estate, different demographics, and different price points. We also intentionally chose not to feature the typical luxury and hospitality projects in this report, because we believe that those types of properties are already well-covered and over-represented in the current trade and consumer media.

We visited all of the thirteen case studies in person between January 2024 and July 2025, and we visited many times more projects than we can profile in this report. For most of the case studies, we conducted interviews with the developer, owner, architect, designer, and/or facility manager before, during, or after our site visits. Some of the projects shared additional background materials for historical and development context. These on-the-ground observations and expert insights were enhanced by our own independent research, based on publicly available information and media sources. Most of the case studies received a thorough review by our project contact for fact-checking, accuracy, and clarification of details.

We have strived to provide the most up-to-date information for every project; all information and data presented in the report is accurate as of the publishing date (September 2025). We should also note that we have approached each of these projects proactively, and none of them has in any way sponsored any part of this report, influenced our selection of these thirteen case studies, or influenced how we present each of the projects.

Case study format.

There are thousands of real estate case studies available in industry publications and across the Internet. What makes these case studies new and different is that we specifically examine each project through the lens of wellness. We selected these case studies not because they represent the "best" or only approaches to wellness real estate, but rather because they represent a cross-section of diverse and creative approaches in different geographic contexts, with interesting features, concepts, and lessons learned. One commonality across all thirteen case studies in this volume is their intentionality – that wellness is thoughtfully embedded in their planning and design from the very beginning, and it is not an afterthought or a check-the-box exercise. The case studies aim to provide a variety of examples that can help spark creative ideas and new thinking about how wellness real estate can be expanded and scaled in different places and for different kinds of target occupants.

With that in mind, each of the thirteen case studies is presented in a uniform format:

- Each case study starts with basic summary data (type of real estate, location, size, price points, year of completion, developer/owner, certifications achieved, weblinks) and an introductory description of the context and background for the project.
- The main narrative for the case studies is organized by each project's "distinctive approaches to wellness," under which we provide an in-depth description of the project's intentions and target market, the approaches and thinking behind the design process, the specific steps taken, and the design and operational features that support its wellness aims.
- For the projects that have documented measurable impacts (whether health/wellness or financial/business impacts), we share these metrics in a dedicated section.

In the last section, we compile the list of features in each project that specifically address GWI's six dimensions of wellness real estate: physical, mental & spiritual, social, civic & community, environmental, and economic & financial (see graphic on *Page ii* for an overview of these dimensions).

Summary of the Featured Projects

American Cancer Society Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation Hope Lodge©
Houston, Texas, United States

Description: One of more than 30 American Cancer Society Hope Lodge facilities in the United States; provides free stays for cancer patients and their caregivers when they travel for treatment.

Size: 2-acre site. A 64,000 sq.ft. facility with 64 one-bedroom suites, in two connected 4-story buildings.

Certifications: None.

Wellness Themes: From healthcare clusters to healthy communities; Infusing wellness into hospitality & travel.

Fox Point Farms
Encinitas (Greater San Diego), California, United States

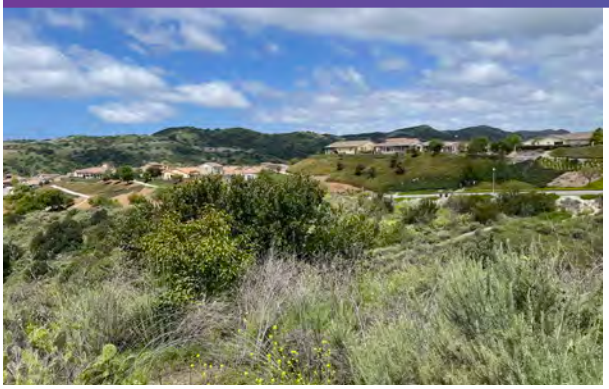
Description: Suburban master-planned agrihood community.

Size: 21.5-acre site (including a 5.5-acre working farm). 250 residential units.

Certifications: WELL for Residential Pilot.

Wellness Themes: Building healthier food environments; Embracing the benefits of nature.

Rancho Mission Viejo
Orange County (Los Angeles), California, United States



Description: Suburban master-planned and mixed-use community.

Size: 23,000-acre site (75% is preserved open space). Up to 14,000 residences, plus 5 million sq.ft. of retail/commercial space.

Certifications: None.

Wellness Themes: Climate adaptation and resilience; Embracing the benefits of nature; Improving healthspans and thriving in aging.

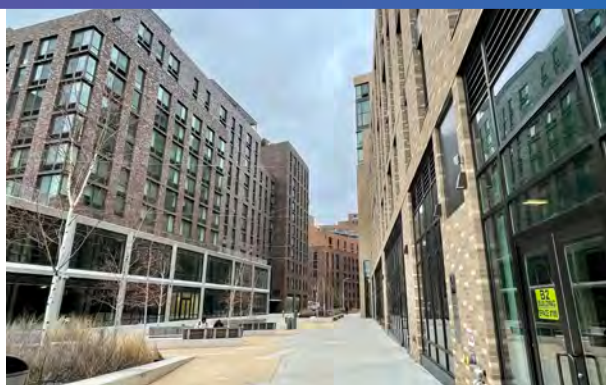
Rockaway Village
Queens (New York City), New York, United States

Description: Newly built urban affordable apartments and mixed-use community on an urban brownfield site.

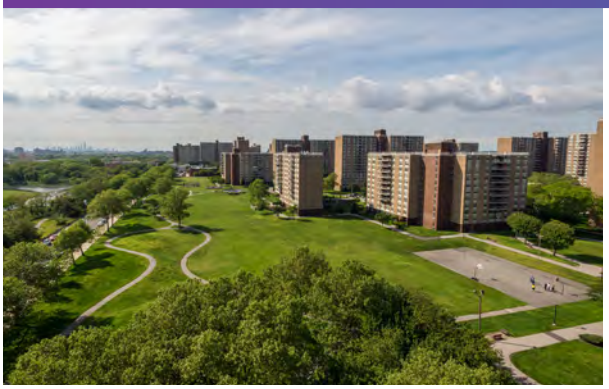
Size: 9.2-acre site. 1,700 residential units in 8 multifamily buildings, plus 115,000 sq.ft. of retail/commercial/community space.

Certifications: None.

Wellness Themes: Healthy homes for the non-rich; Wellness-centric urban regeneration.



Spring Creek Towers
Brooklyn (New York City), New York, United States



Description: Renovation of a large-scale urban affordable apartments and mixed-use community (first opened in 1974).

Size: 150-acre site (including 110+ acres of green space and parks). 8.2 million sq.ft. building area. 46 multifamily towers with 5,881 residential units, housing 16,000-18,000 residents, and 225,000+ sq.ft. of retail/community facilities, 2 public schools, 8 parking garages, and a standalone power plant.

Certifications: Fitwel 2 Star Community.

Wellness Themes: Healthy homes for the non-rich; Building healthier food environments.

The Mather, Tysons

Fairfax County (Greater Washington, DC), Virginia United States

Description: Life Plan Community (62+ independent living, assisted living, memory support, skilled nursing), located within a larger mixed-use, transit-oriented suburban redevelopment project.

Size: 4-acre site (including a 3-acre park). 293 residential units in two connected high-rise buildings, plus 14,000+ sq.ft. of retail/commercial space.

Certifications: WELL certification in progress; LEED Gold pre-certified.

Wellness Themes: Improving healthspans and thriving in aging; Earth friendly and sustainable buildings.

The Pearl

Silver Spring (Greater Washington, DC), Maryland, United States

Description: Urban Class A multifamily community, located within a larger mixed-use, transit-oriented redevelopment project.

Size: 3.3-acre site (including 30,000 sq.ft. of outdoor amenity spaces and a 2-acre park). A 317,000 sq.ft. building with 284 residential units for lease.

Certifications: Fitwel 2 Star Multifamily Residential; LEED Gold.

Wellness Themes: Earth friendly and sustainable buildings; Healthy homes for the non-rich; Wellness-centric urban regeneration.

The Picket Fence Concept Home
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States

Description: 3-story detached townhome, created as a "concept home" to pioneer the supply of attainable urban infill homes that enhance well-being and environmental sustainability.

Size: 0.05-acre site. Two residences: a 2,007 sq.ft. 2-story 3-bedroom unit, above a 660 sq.ft. studio accessory dwelling unit (ADU).

Certifications: None.

Wellness Themes: Innovations to improve the construction process and home supply; Earth-friendly and sustainable buildings; Healthy homes for the non-rich.

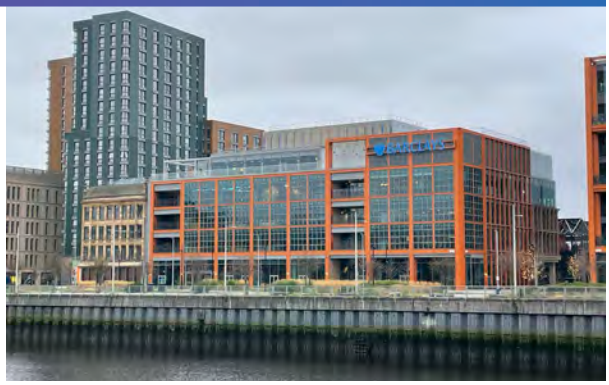
Barclays Bank Campus, Buchanan Wharf
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

Description: Open corporate campus for Barclays Bank, within the larger Buchanan Wharf mixed-use project, developed on an urban brownfield site.

Size: 6.7-acre site (including a 3-acre park). 470,000 sq.ft. of Grade A office space across 3 buildings, housing 6,500+ workers for Barclays.

Certifications: WELL Platinum; WELL Equity; BREEAM Excellent; EPC "A" rating.

Wellness Themes: Wellness-centered urban regeneration; Improving sensory environments with neuroarchitecture and the arts; Earth-friendly and sustainable living.



Brent Cross Town
Barnet Borough, Greater London, United Kingdom

Description: Suburban, high-density master-planned and mixed-use "park town," developed on a brownfield site.

Size: 180-acre site (including 50 acres of parks and recreational spaces). 6,700 residences planned, plus 3 million sq.ft. of commercial space (for up to 25,000 workers) and 460,000 sq.ft. of retail/leisure space.

Certifications: UKGBC Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework; WiredScore and SmartScore Neighborhood; WELL, BREEAM, and/or NABERS UK to be used in some buildings.

Wellness Themes: Wellness-centered urban regeneration; Improving sensory environments with neuroarchitecture and the arts; Healthy homes for the non-rich; Earth-friendly and sustainable living.

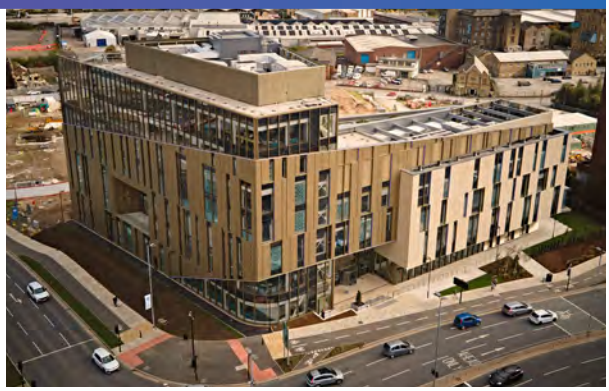
Daphne Steele Building, University of Huddersfield National Health Innovation Campus
Huddersfield, Northern England, United Kingdom

Description: A university building housing state-of-the-art allied heath teaching facilities and patient care facilities. The first building to be constructed on the University of Huddersfield's new National Health Innovation Campus (an urban redevelopment project).

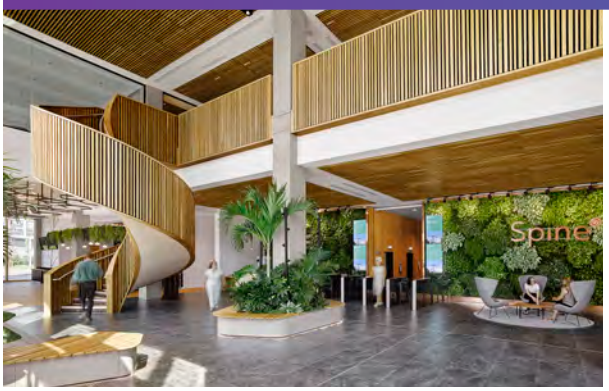
Size: A 107,000 sq.ft., 6 story building; part of a 7-acre campus that will eventually house 800,000 sq.ft. of space across up to 7 buildings.

Certifications: WELL Platinum pre-certified; BREAAM Excellent.

Wellness Themes: From healthcare clusters to healthy communities; Wellness-centric urban regeneration.



The Spine
Liverpool, United Kingdom



Description: A 14-story Grade A commercial building with offices, clinical exams, research, training, and events. Serves as the northern headquarters for the Royal College of Physicians (RCP).

Size: 152,000 sq.ft. net area; part of a larger, 30-acre urban innovation district project.

Certifications: WELL v2 Pilot Core Platinum certification for the building; WELL v2 Pilot Platinum for the 70,000 sq.ft. occupied by RCP; BREEAM Outstanding; IACC Green Star Gold; ECOsmart Gold.

Wellness Themes: Embracing the benefits of nature; From healthcare clusters to healthy communities; Earth-friendly and sustainable living.

Urbanest Battersea Student Accommodations
London, United Kingdom

Description: Purpose-built university student accommodation. Part of the larger Urbanest Battersea mixed-use development that also includes commercial and retail spaces.

Size: 0.495-acre site. 245,838 sq.ft. building area for the student housing, with 853 student beds in three high-rise towers.

Certifications: WELL for Residential Pilot; Passivhaus certified; BREEAM Outstanding.

Wellness Themes: Diversifying co-living models; Earth-friendly and sustainable living; Wellness-centric urban regeneration.

American Cancer Society Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation Hope Lodge©

Houston, Texas, United States

Photo Courtesy of Perkins&Will

The American Cancer Society Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation Hope Lodge© in Houston, Texas (henceforth referred to as Hope Lodge Houston) is one of the newest among more than 30 American Cancer Society (ACS) Hope Lodges located across the United States. Cancer treatment is stressful, time-consuming, and expensive; for patients who need to travel far away from home to receive treatment, there is the added financial burden of paying for lodging, food, and transportation. The ACS Hope Lodge program, founded in 1970, aims to provide a free home away from home for cancer patients and their caregivers when they travel for treatment. Hope Lodge Houston, which opened in 2021, is a 64,000 sq.ft. facility located near the Texas Medical Center campus and its various

- One of more than 30 American Cancer Society Hope Lodge facilities located across the United States, in close proximity to cancer treatment centers
- Free stays offered to qualified cancer patients and their caregivers
- 2-acre site
- 64,000 sq.ft. facility
- 64 one-bedroom suites in two connected 4-story buildings
- Completed in 2019 and opened in 2021
- Developer: American Cancer Society, in collaboration with Perkins&Will
- Certifications: None

Photos Courtesy of Perkins&Will

hospitals and cancer treatment centers. The lodge offers 64 one-bedroom suites free of charge, on a first-come, first-served basis, to qualified patients undergoing active cancer treatment (through referral by their treatment centers). There is no limit to how long patients can stay – some have stayed for up to a year or more at Hope Lodge Houston – as long as they continue to be in active treatment. While there is no housekeeping service, the lodge provides free linens, laundry facilities, and cleaning supplies to guests. Hope Lodge Houston is essentially a hospitality complex hosting guests with medical conditions and specialized needs, staffed by professionals as well as a group of dedicated volunteers. According to Perkins&Will, the overall design of Hope Lodge Houston "seeks to develop a building as a sanctuary, providing refuge and a sense of rejuvenation and hope, helping to generate the energy and camaraderie necessary to promote the healing process."[1]

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Do no harm to cancer patients.

One of the guiding principles for wellness real estate is to "do no harm," or making sure that a building's materials, design, and operations do not bring harm to its occupants. At Hope Lodge Houston, the main occupants are cancer patients undergoing active treatment. With this in mind, the designers decided to take the "do no harm" principle to the highest level, knowing that guests are recovering from recent surgeries, or may have mobility issues, compromised immune systems, or heightened sensitivity to allergens, smells, and noise. Careful consideration was given to every aspect of the building's materials, design, environment, and operations, to ensure that they are as healthy as possible. The design team hired an industrial hygienist to analyze the water and air around the site and assess the need for filtration. Finding an uncomfortable amount of petroleum byproducts in Houston's water supply, the team decided to install an advanced water filtration system to deliver the highest quality water within the building. Due to air quality concerns, the design team decided against using natural ventilation (i.e., windows do not open). The mechanical system was designed to provide space downstream of primary MERV 13 filters for future carbon filters. The team also examined more than 80 different building materials and substances of concern within them, to ensure that they are safe for immunocompromised occupants. "We're housing people with cancer, so we don't need to expose them to more carcinogens," said Tori Wickard, an architect on the design team.

[1] https://perkinswill.com/project/hope-lodge-houston/

A lot of thought went into the spatial design, as well as the selection of interior finishes, furnishings, and materials that do not trap dust and are easy to clean. The design team adopted a hospital-like mindset about preventing infections, while still trying to create spaces that are not clinical or antiseptic-looking. Suites are designed to be acoustically private to minimize disturbances to guests. Due to the heightened olfactory sensitivity of some cancer patients, and their reactions to cooking smells, commercial-grade exhaust fans are installed over all cooking stoves and ventilate directly to the outside. Deliberate physical barriers (glass walls and doors) separate the community kitchen and dining areas from the rest of the lodge to reduce the spread of food and cooking smells.

Harnessing biophilia for physical, mental, and social well-being.

Going through cancer treatment is stressful for both patients and their caregivers, so guests at Hope Lodge Houston appreciate being in an environment that strengthens their feelings of wellness and resilience. The design team incorporated biophilia as a central principle throughout the facility to create a human-centered and healing environment. Hope Lodge Houston comprises two four-story buildings connected by a low-rise structure that houses the reception area, offices, meeting/gathering spaces, and communal kitchen and dining area. The buildings frame an interior courtyard or cloister with a "Healing Garden" that brings rejuvenating natural light into all interior spaces. All guest rooms and communal spaces (waiting, lounging, dining, and socializing areas) have a view of the garden, giving occupants the benefit of a tranquil view of nature and beauty. On a practical level, the design team said that this arrangement also shields occupants from the noise and vehicular exhaust from the exterior surrounding highways and high-traffic roads. Views of nature are crucial to delivering biophilic benefits at Hope Lodge Houston because indoor plants are not feasible in this kind of facility; in fact, potted plants or floral arrangements are strictly not allowed in the building because pollen and other allergens can affect cancer patients. Other biophilic elements include interior finishings that are dominated by wood and natural materials in neutral colors. The large, floor-to-ceiling windows let in ample natural light, and the feeling of being connected to nature and daylight can bring patients a sense of energy, rejuvenation, and optimism.

Views of nature are key to delivering biophilic benefits, since some patients are sensitive to indoor plants while undergoing cancer treatment.

Photo Courtesy of Perkins&Will

Cooking and sharing food for healing and community.

Healthy eating is a key pillar of wellness. For cancer patients, being able to cook healthy meals is not only important for nourishment but also a financial relief from ordering restaurant food or buying pre-prepared meals. Besides the Healing Garden, the other centerpiece of Hope Lodge Houston is the community kitchen and dining room. The community kitchen is very spacious, with plenty of stoves, cookware, dishware, and dishwashing machines. Each guest is provided a designated kitchen storage area, as well as designated refrigerator/freezer spaces. Since all guests have traveled away from home, far from their usual support systems, it is important that they find community and social connections in an otherwise isolating circumstance. To cook and eat at Hope Lodge Houston is to see prosocial design at work. The community kitchen and dining room is essentially the facility's social hub – where caregivers from all over the country and the world cook alongside one another, sharing recipes, equipment, and food; where patients swap cancer war stories and trade advice on hospitals, doctors, treatment options, and medical insurance; and where guests offer each other solidarity, comfort, support, and encouragement during their cancer journeys. There is also celebration whenever a guest finishes treatment and checks out to go home. The community kitchen space is designed to provide a homelike environment and enable a nurturing community where guests become one another's support systems.

Measurable Impacts

The wellness impacts of Hope Lodge Houston are evident from the guest comments:[2]

"Hope Lodge is a glimmering star in the dark sky of confusion surrounding a cancer diagnosis. The value of Hope Lodge is equal to many of the high-class hotels. Nothing can replace the comfort of such places to rest and recover," said a guest from Virginia.

"The Hope Lodge is a loving, caring place for people in need of help, company, and companionship. I met so many wonderful people in my same situation, and that makes the time and treatments bearable. It is like coming home every day to friends," signed by a guest from Maryland.

[2] https://www.cancer.org/support-programs-and-services/patient-lodging/hope-lodge/houston.html

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Careful scrutiny and selection of building materials to minimize guest exposure to unhealthy and carcinogenic substances.
- Advanced water filtration system to deliver safe drinking water.
- Selection of airtight windows due to air quality concerns in the Houston area.
- Mechanical system was designed to provide space downstream of the primary MERV 13 filters for future carbon filters.
- Fully equipped community kitchen for food storage and preparation.
- Commercial-grade exhaust fans in the kitchen to increase olfactory comfort for cancer patients.
- Universal design principles utilized for all spaces (e.g., wide hallways, sliding doors, barrier-free transition spaces, wheelchair accessibility, etc.).
- A fully equipped gym with cardio and weightlifting equipment.
- 24-hour front desk, sign-in/out procedures, and key cards for patient/caregiver safety and security.

Mental & Spiritual

- Biophilic principles are central to the design from the ground-up, aiming to maximize natural light and views of outdoors/nature, while shielding the lodge from the surrounding highways and heavy traffic.
- Healing garden in the central courtyard as the centerpiece of the lodge, with beautiful landscaping and ample outdoor seating for gathering and contemplation.
- Spaces are designed to be acoustically private.
- Glass pavilion for meditation overlooking the healing garden.
- A library/resource room and a music corner with a grand piano for use by all guests.
- Design and operations that reduce inconveniences for guests, such as ample washing machines and dryers on each floor, free cleaning supplies, linens, etc.

Social

- The community kitchen and dining room is designed to facilitate maximum social interaction during food preparation, eating, and cleaning. In effect, it functions as the main social hub of the lodge.
- Plenty of gathering areas both indoors and outdoors.

Civic & Community

- An inclusive community that welcomes guests from all over the world, without regard to their race, religion, nationality, gender, or family status.
- The Hope Lodge in Houston was designed with the lessons learned from other American Cancer Society Hope Lodges, and it incorporated feedback from their occupants, including from a recently opened Hope Lodge in Dallas, Texas.

Environmental

- Emphasis on biophilic design and use of natural materials throughout.
- Advanced mechanical and electrical systems that optimize energy consumption and reduce carbon footprint.
- Materials, furnishings, and fabrics are carefully selected to avoid dust accumulation and facilitate easy disinfection and cleaning.
- Designed to take full advantage of natural light, including during power outages.
- Designed for climate resilience, e.g., generator-powered refrigerators and elevators that prevent medicines from spoiling, and that ensure patients can get to their treatment centers during power disruptions.
- Stormwater collection system under the surface-level parking lot.
- Heat and drought resistant plantings.

Economic & Financial

- Free lodging for all qualified cancer patients and their caregivers.
- Unlimited stays for as long as the treatment plan requires.
- Fully equipped kitchen with plenty of storage, so patients and caregivers do not have to rely on expensive takeout or store-bought prepared meals.
- Free transportation to nearby cancer treatment facilities.

Website References

- https://www.cancer.org/support-programs-and-services/patient-lodging/hope-lodge/houston.html
- https://perkinswill.com/project/hope-lodge-houston/

Fox Point Farms

Encinitas (Greater San Diego), California, United States

Photo Courtesy of Stephen Whalen

Fox Point Farms is a 21.5-acre agrihood community located in the City of Encinitas – a beach city situated about 28 miles north of downtown San Diego. When complete, the development will include 250 residential units, including a mix of for-sale cottages, carriage units, and townhomes, (ranging from 700–1,600 square feet), along with 40 apartments set aside as affordable rentals. Construction started in December 2021, and the first residents moved into the development in spring 2024; as of spring 2025, all units had been pre-sold, with a two-year waitlist. At the heart of the development is a 5.5-acre regenerative organic farm, which supplies produce for several on-site retail and artisan food outlets and supports a variety of agro-based initiatives and programs. All the community amenities are open to the public and are intended to attract residents from surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, residents have access to a private 6,000 square foot recreation center with a swimming pool, fitness and workout areas, and other social spaces.

- Suburban master-planned agrihood community
- 21.5-acre site (including a 5.5-acre working farm)
- 250 residential units (1-3 bedrooms), including 40 apartments reserved as affordable rentals (for families at 30-50% of area median income, via lottery)
- Home prices: $700,000–$1.5m for sales; $1,093–$1,342/month for affordable rental units
- Opened in 2024 (still building, expected completion in 2026)
- Developers: Nolen Communities and Shea Homes
- Certifications: WELL for Residential Pilot

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Agro-centric wellness living that also serves the wider community.

The design of Fox Point Farms is driven by a strong conviction that food systems, sustainability, and human health form a closed loop. The 5.5-acre organic farm is the centerpiece of the development, situated adjacent to the cottages and townhomes. The farm not only supplies a green viewscape for residents and food for the community, but it also serves as a laboratory and classroom for earth-friendly farming and health-enhancing food production. Organic farming at Fox Point Farms embraces regenerative agriculture practices like no-till farming and cover cropping, to improve the quality of the soil to produce nutrient-dense food. Environmentally responsible food choices and the impact on human health are not afterthoughts but the mission behind the operation of this community.

The farm supplies produce for a new community supported agriculture (CSA) program as well as for a variety of on-site retail and artisan food craft businesses and vendors – including a farm-to-table restaurant (Haven Farm+Table), a farmstand market (Harvest Market), a coffee shop supplied by a coffee roastery (Fox Point Roasters), an herbal products and apothecary business (Heal Botanics), and a craft brewery operation (Fox Point Brewing). Other agro- and nature-based features at Fox Point Farms include edible landscaping, community lawns and patios, a glass-sided greenhouse events space, a walking/biking path with fitness stations surrounding the farm, a natural play space, and fire pit and barbeque areas. While these amenities support the character and attractiveness of the development to homebuyers, they are also open to the public and are creating a new hub for bringing together the wider community around agro- and wellness-oriented experiences. Fox Point Farms is building an active roster of on-site events and classes to help cultivate this community, including farm programs (farm tours, animal encounters, pick-your-own events), wellness classes (yoga, Pilates, meditation, breathwork, sound baths), outdoor events on the community green (movie nights, concerts, wellness workshops, dining events), and private event spaces (for parties, wellness retreats, corporate events, etc.).

Photo Courtesy of Stephen Whalen

Photo Courtesy of Stephen Whalen

"By cutting out the middleman we are realizing significant cost savings to make these operations viable."

– Brian Grover, founder and managing partner of Fox Point Farms

The economics of a hyper-local operation.

The small-scale operations of the organic farm and artisan businesses at Fox Point Farms seem to defy the principles of efficiency and cost-savings through economies of scale. The Fox Point Brewing operation is so small that it only supplies the on-site restaurant/bar, with a direct tank-to-tap system that runs underground. The apothecary business, Heal Botanics, sells herbal products crafted with ingredients sourced directly from the farm. The organic farm also supplies the CSA, the farmstand, and the restaurant. The founder and managing partner of Fox Point Farms and Nolen Communities, Brian Grover, explained to the GWI research team the economic reasoning behind a "hyper-local" operation: "By cutting out the middleman and eliminating transportation costs, we are realizing significant cost savings to make these operations viable." The co-location of the artisan businesses with the farm creates opportunities that support both sustainability and economic aims – for example, using spent grains from the brewery to feed the chickens at the farm. Although the population living in the 250 homes within the development is not large enough to support these operations on their own, the business model can work because all of the on-site businesses and the farm draw from the broader community, and the community has truly become an active, central gathering space for families from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The economics of the hyper-local businesses have also helped Fox Point Farms to overcome zoning challenges. The land on which the development stands in north San Diego County was originally the site of a greenhouse operation, zoned for agriculture and mixed residential and commercial use. The decision to add a brewery created a zoning challenge, because industrial operation was not included in the site approval. However, with the farm supplying hops directly to the brewery, Nolen Communities was able to make the argument that the brewery is an accessory use to the site's approved agricultural use, which eventually won zoning approval.

Separating the residential real estate from the community wellness operations.

Nolen Communities originally entered into a purchase agreement to buy the 21.5 acres where Fox Point Farms stands in 2017. After a years-long process of obtaining the land entitlements, Nolen Communities sold the residential parcels (12 acres) to Shea Homes for development and construction. The residential portion of the community – which consists of 250 homes of various styles, sizes, and price points – will develop and operate its own homeowners' association (HOA) and amenities, including a residents-only swimming pool and fitness/recreation center. The 40 affordable units were separately sold to Chelsea Investment Corporation, a low-income housing provider. Nolen Communities retained the remaining 8 acres of commercial parcels to develop what Brian Grover calls a "resilient artisan-crafted community." Nolen Communities is focusing on the farm operations and on developing and managing the community wellness amenities and adjacent businesses, all of which are open to the public.

As the visionary behind Fox Point Farms, Brian Grover is confident that this business model for the farm-centered community-wide agricultural, wellness, and adjacent artisan and retail operations will be profitable as a whole: "We are going to operate everything ourselves and will not be bringing in any tenants or partners. We will be opening San Diego's first true 'farm-to-table' restaurant – you can watch the food grow in the field while you eat it off your plate. Hops grown on the farm will be used to brew our beer, and spent grain from the brewery will be fed to our chickens. Our coffee beans will be grown on our farm and a farm across the street. Our community green will host weekly musical events and family movie nights, and our event space will host regular classes in yoga, meditation, breathwork, dance, art, and ceramics."[1]

Measurable Impacts

As of spring 2025, all of the units under construction at Fox Point Farms have been pre-sold, and there is a two-year waitlist with thousands of names. So far, all buyers have purchased their homes 6-12 months before they were even built, with very limited marketing efforts by the homebuilder.[2] At $1,400 per square foot, the price represents a premium over other homes in the region. According to Brian Grover of Nolen Communities, buyers have already reaped up to 60% appreciation in their property values in just a 6-12-month period (in 2023-2024).

Fox Point Farms has become a community hub, attracting hundreds of local community neighbors, in addition to Fox Point residents each week, fostering community connection, social wellness and a greater appreciation for healthy food and care for the ecosystem. It has clearly filled a need for a healthy, activated community gathering place.

[1] https://encinitasranch.org/fox-point-farms-agrihood-community-to-bring-organic-farm-brewery-truly-farm-to-table-restaurant-to-san-diego/

[2] Mohar, P. (Jan. 7, 2025). Thousands are on the waiting list for this Encinitas community. Only 40 homes remain. *San Diego Union-Tribune*. https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/01/07/thousands-are-on-the-waiting-list-for-this-encinitas-community-only-40-homes-remain/.

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- All residents are within a short walking distance to the 5.5-acre regenerative organic farm and other on-site recreational/wellness amenities.
- Farm-to-table restaurant and farmstand with fresh produce and products grown and produced on-site.
- Walking/biking path with fitness stations surrounding the development.
- Community wellness facilities (cold plunge, barrel sauna, massage/treatment rooms) and weekly programming/classes (yoga, Pilates, etc.).
- Residents-only fitness center and swimming pool as part of HOA benefits.

Mental & Spiritual

- Mind-body offerings, such as yoga, meditation, breathwork, and sound healing, offered as part of weekly wellness classes – held in a glass-sided greenhouse building that is connected to the surrounding nature.
- Farm-based educational programs, such as learning how to make your own herb-infused oil from plants grown at on-site farm.

Social

- The organic farm; the adjacent food, artisan, and retail businesses; and the extensive outdoor social spaces (community green, play spaces, firepits, etc.) are all designed as community gathering places and are open to the public, creating a new social and economic hub for the wider community.
- Regular programs and special events run by Hatch Gatherings (for both residents and the wider public alike), aiming to bring people together through farm programs, wellness classes, and outdoor events on the community green.

Environmental

- Organic farm at the center of the community, embracing regenerative agriculture practices like no-till farming, cover cropping, and chemical-free methods, and supporting microbial diversity and soil regeneration.
- Electric vehicle charging for all residents and guests.
- Electric bike share program for residents.
- 434 kW of solar power.
- Stormwater reuse and rainwater captured via CorGal rain tanks.
- Native and drought-tolerant landscaping.
- High-efficiency water heaters, low-flow water fixtures, and LED lighting throughout.
- Worked to meet LEED Gold standards but did not seek certification.

Economic & Financial

- The combination of the organic farm and the adjacent artisan food businesses creates a circular micro-economy supporting local production.
- The 250 residential units are designed to meet diverse needs and individual/family situations – including a mix of cottages, carriage units, townhomes, and apartments, ranging from 1-3 bedrooms.
- The development offers higher density, attached homes, and smaller square footage (700–1,600 sq.ft.), in a region that is surrounded by very large single-family homes/lots, helping to address the major housing shortage throughout Southern California.
- Home prices ($700,000–$1.5m) are quite a bit lower than the typical prices for single family homes in the surrounding neighborhoods ($3m+), helping more families afford to live in the region.
- 40 of the units are set aside as “very low income” and “extremely low income” affordable apartment rentals, for families at 30-50% of the area median income.

Website References

- https://www.foxpointfarms.com/
- https://www.sheahomes.com/new-homes/california/san-diego-area/encinitas/fox-point-farms
- https://www.liveatfoxpointfarms.com/

Rancho Mission Viejo

Orange County (Los Angeles), California, United States

Rancho Mission Viejo (RMV) is 23,000-acre master-planned community developed on a family-owned ranch that dates back over 140 years. The community is located on the southern edge of the Los Angeles metropolitan area, about 60 miles from downtown LA. Planning for RMV began in earnest in the early 2000s, and it is envisioned to encompass up to 14,000 homes across five distinct villages, along with extensive retail and office space. Since its inception, two villages have been completed. A third village, Rienda, is in process, with robust sales and 75% of the village already sold out as of spring 2025.

RMV is currently home to over 13,000 people living in more than 5,600 residences. Upon completion, the community will house more than 35,000 residents of all ages and from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. As such, this project stands out as being one of the largest intentional wellness real estate developments in the world, delivering wellness impacts on a large scale.

- Suburban master-planned and mixed-use community
- 23,000-acre site (75% is preserved open space)
- Up to 14,000 residences (condos, townhomes, single family homes of 1-5 bedrooms; senior living for 55+), plus 5 million sq.ft. of retail and commercial space
- More than 35,000 residents upon completion
- Home prices: $500s–$1.2m+
- Opened in 2013 (still building, expected completion in 2035)
- Developers: Rancho Mission Viejo LLC and DMB Associates
- Certifications: None

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Embedding wellness in all aspects of planning, operations, and communications.

According to Amaya Genaro, Vice President-Community Services, who has been involved in the project since 2006, wellness was embedded in the DNA of this project right from the beginning, including the land planning and stewardship, neighborhood and infrastructure design, and resident programming. RMV officially adopted seven dimensions of wellness (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, environmental, and financial) to guide its continued development, operations, community programming, and marketing. These wellness dimensions, which were identified through community engagement (focus groups and surveys), are explicitly mapped onto the RMV land plan. Corresponding design features, infrastructure, amenities, services, and programming that support each wellness dimension have been plotted throughout the development . Every aspect of RMV's development is guided by its aim to "make it easier and more fun to pursue all dimensions of wellness at every stage of life," and the developers have specifically set an objective to become one of the "most well communities in the country." RMV's intentionality to support holistic wellness is communicated to its residents through programming and activities coordinated and/or facilitated by RanchLife and The Nature Reserve. RMV also specifically communicates its wellness offerings as a differentiating feature to potential buyers in the sales environment and via its website and promotional materials.

Nature and conservation as the foundation of wellness.

Wellness at RMV is centered around The Nature Reserve – over 17,000 acres of oak woodlands, streams, canyons, and wildlands, which are permanently designated as protected open space (representing 75% of RMV's total acreage). The Nature Reserve conducts ecological conservation, monitoring, and research functions, as well as outreach and educational programming for the wider region (beyond just RMV residents). RMV encompasses a working cattle ranch and orchards, and it intentionally ties the ranch's long agricultural heritage to the culture that it tries to cultivate in the growing community. Smaller-scale community farms are also embedded within some of the villages, providing residents with direct access to local produce and hands-on programming. All of the villages, neighborhoods, and amenities are nestled within RMV's rich natural environment, which not only provides dramatic vistas but also ready access to extensive outdoor sports and recreation amenities. RMV's publicly accessible preserved lands, open spaces and scenic vistas, orchards and farms, and extensive trail networks are the key assets for the community to deliver the settings, opportunities, and programming for supporting its residents' physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental wellness.

Rancho Mission Viejo provides publicly accessible preserved lands, open spaces and scenic vistas, orchards and farms, and extensive trail networks.

A socially connected and multigenerational community.

RMV has all of the wellness and recreational amenities that one would expect in a development of this size – e.g., resort-style clubhouses, gyms and fitness centers, swimming pools, sports fields/courts, parks, playgrounds, firepits and barbeque areas, and even camping sites. In addition, there are several restaurants and coffee shops operated by third-party providers on HOA property. Rather than being clustered in one centralized location, these amenities and community gathering spaces are intentionally scattered throughout all of the villages to encourage socializing and maximize accessibility. The Master Maintenance Corporation operates and manages all amenities, community grounds, and common spaces. One of RMV's pillars is "Neighbors," with RanchLife overseeing an extensive calendar of daily/weekly programs, activities, and social events designed to foster social interaction and a sense of community. All residents have access to RanchRide, a community shuttle service for inter-village movement within RMV (as well as to neighboring communities and locations in south Orange County) – reducing the need to drive private vehicles throughout the sprawling development.

RMV's Gavilán neighborhoods provide exclusive 55+ housing within each of the villages. While these neighborhoods have their own dedicated 55+ amenities, the homes are not isolated within gated enclaves but instead are intentionally placed at the center of each village to encourage intergenerational socializing and connections. Consequently, residents living in Gavilán 55+ homes regularly mingle with other residents of all ages in the wider RMV community, recreational areas, and programming/events.

Measurable Impacts

Wellness impacts:

Biannual and annual surveys of residents are conducted by the HOA and Lifestyle team. Additionally, RMV occasionally holds focus groups in order to understand how RMV residents perceive wellness, how RMV can best deliver wellness offerings to meet resident needs, and how RMV is affecting residents' wellness.

A series of focus groups held in June 2021 found that the following aspects of RMV have the greatest impacts on residents' well-being: recreational amenities (parks, trails); nature (open space, views), social connectivity and sense of community, location, safety and cleanliness, variety and scale of the community, farms and farmers markets, and intergenerational living.

The 2023 RMV Resident Survey (with 1,247 responses) revealed the following wellness impacts:

- 83% of respondents agree or agree strongly that living at RMV supports their well-being.
- 73% engage in 30+ minutes of moderate exercise 3x a week or more.
- 76% walk, jog, or bike for fitness on RMV's trails or pathways.

Business impacts:

- Base home prices for the recent phase release (spring 2025) range from $750,000 to $1.2m ($540/sq.ft. to $688/sq.ft.). Higher density homes have an 8-week sales rate of more than one home sold per week, outperforming other competitive communities in the region.
- Median resale pricing in RMV increased by 16.7% over 12 months from October 2023 to October 2024, as compared to an average 4.8% increase for all other Orange County resales during the same period, demonstrating ongoing buyer demand for the wellness lifestyle unique to RMV.[1]

[1] Source: Redfin, and John Burns Research & Consulting.

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street.
- Extensive networks of trails, bikeways, and paved paths for recreation and active transit.
- 95% of homes have access to fitness and recreational centers or parks that are within a quarter mile.
- Three community farms, and a regular farmers market for access to fresh produce.
- Health services are offered via a 26,000 sq.ft. health center (MemorialCare Medical Group in Sendero Marketplace) and the first phase of a 75,000 sq.ft. medical office building (Providence Mission Health Center in Esencia, currently under construction), located within RMV's retail centers.

Mental & Spiritual

- Easy access to the 17,000-acre nature reserve and open spaces.
- Scenic vistas for contemplation and meditation.
- Education, programming, and community volunteer opportunities offered by The Nature Reserve.
- Lifelong education offered by public and private schools (including a Montessori preschool and a K-8 school located within RMV, with an additional K-8 under construction) and a nearby community college.
- Mental health programming, classes, and workshops (e.g., yoga, tai chi, qigong, Pilates, sound baths, journaling in nature) offered by The Nature Reserve, RanchLife, and resident-led clubs.
- Community events that honor diverse heritages (e.g., Chinese New Year, Diwali, Easter, Hanukkah), as well as nearby places of worship.

Social

- Intentional siting of community amenities and 55+ homes throughout the villages to encourage social interactions.
- Extensive community programming and events by RanchLife and The Nature Reserve (food and beverage events, seasonal outdoor events, concerts, and farmers markets have been identified by residents as some of the most important).
- Numerous indoor and outdoor spaces (e.g., community parks, pavilions, clubhouses, firepits and barbeque areas, etc.) for family gatherings, club activities, and social events.
- On-site restaurants, coffee houses, and clubhouses identified by residents as very important for social connections.
- More than 60 resident-led clubs for those with like-minded interests (e.g., arts & crafts, gardening, finance, book clubs, etc.).

Environmental

- Land stewardship and preservation of canyons, oak trees, wildlife and ecologically sensitive areas within the development plan, via the 17,000-acre nature reserve and local farming.
- Land conservation efforts and resident programming build a culture of care ethos for the environment.
- Proactive wildfire resilience tactics and fire-wise community design approaches to reduce risks, informed by a fire behavior modeling study (e.g., home-hardening and landscaping restrictions, limited vegetation and hardscapes around perimeters to create non-combustible buffer zones, requirements for noncombustible construction materials and automatic fire sprinklers throughout the community).
- Water supply resiliency measures (in partnership with the local Santa Margarita Water District), including the Gobernadora Basin (integrated flood control, water recycling, and groundwater recharge for potable water) and the Trampas Reservoir (storing 1.6 billion gallons of reclaimed wastewater for irrigation in RMV and regionally).
- Water-wise landscaping to reduce irrigation demand (e.g., drought-tolerant plants, using recycled water for irrigation).
- RanchRide shuttle service (serving RMV and regional locations and events) and the extensive trail/pathway network reduces the need to use private vehicles.

Economic & Financial

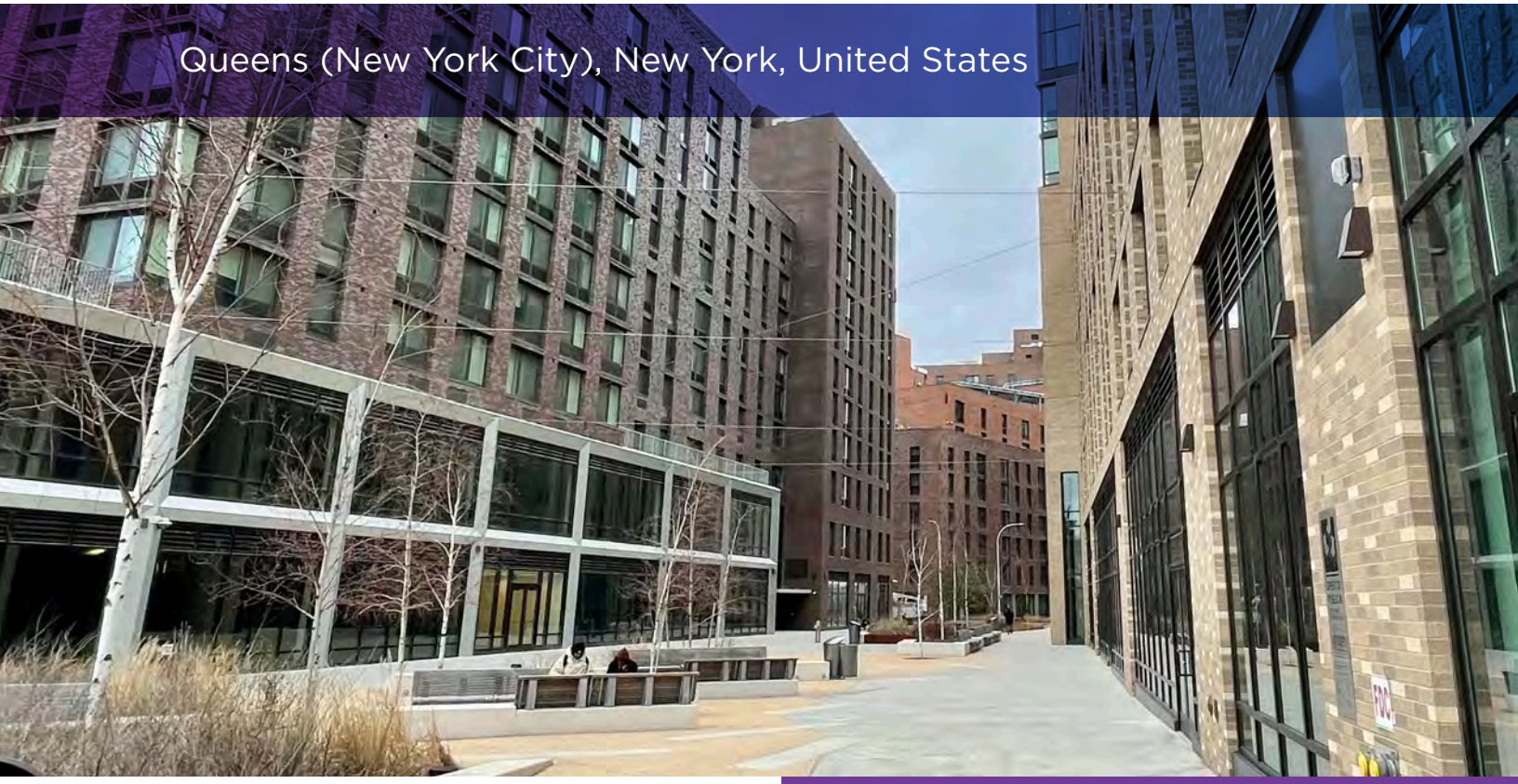
- 70% of the homes in the current phase of development are targeted as attainable housing (affordable apartments and high-density homes), for people earning 80-120% of the area's median income.
- Resident programming includes workshops on financial topics (e.g., living trusts, options for long-term care, helping older residents prepare for their next life phase), as well as a resident-led investment club.
- WiFi and cell coverage via 5-Gigabit fiber infrastructure supports the 70% of RMV residents who work at home part-/full-time to comfortably work throughout the community, including in outdoor spaces.

Website Reference

- https://www.ranchomissionviejo.com

Rockaway Village

Queens (New York City), New York, United States



Rockaway Village is a five-phase urban infill, mixed-use, and affordable housing development located in the Queens Borough of New York City. The project is part of an urban renewal plan to reimagine and redevelop the Far Rockaway neighborhood, a region that suffered some of the most extensive damage from Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Rockaway Village is developed and managed by Phipps Houses, the oldest (since 1905) and largest not-for-profit developer, owner, and manager of affordable housing in New York City. Phase 1 of the project opened in 2021, and Phase 5 is currently under construction, with a target completion date of 2026. The entire 9.2-acre development encompasses 1,700 units of studio to three-bedroom apartments across eight buildings, along with extensive ground-level retail, commercial, and community/public spaces that serve the wider community.

- Urban affordable apartments and mixed-use community on a brownfield site
- 9.2-acre site
- 1.7 million sq.ft. building area, including 115,000 sq.ft. of retail/commercial/community space
- 1,700 residential units in 8 apartment buildings (4-18 stories)
- Unit prices: $388–$2,535/month (primarily for families at 30-80% of area median income, via lottery)
- Opened in 2021 (still building, expected completion in 2026)
- Developer: Phipps Houses
- Certifications: None

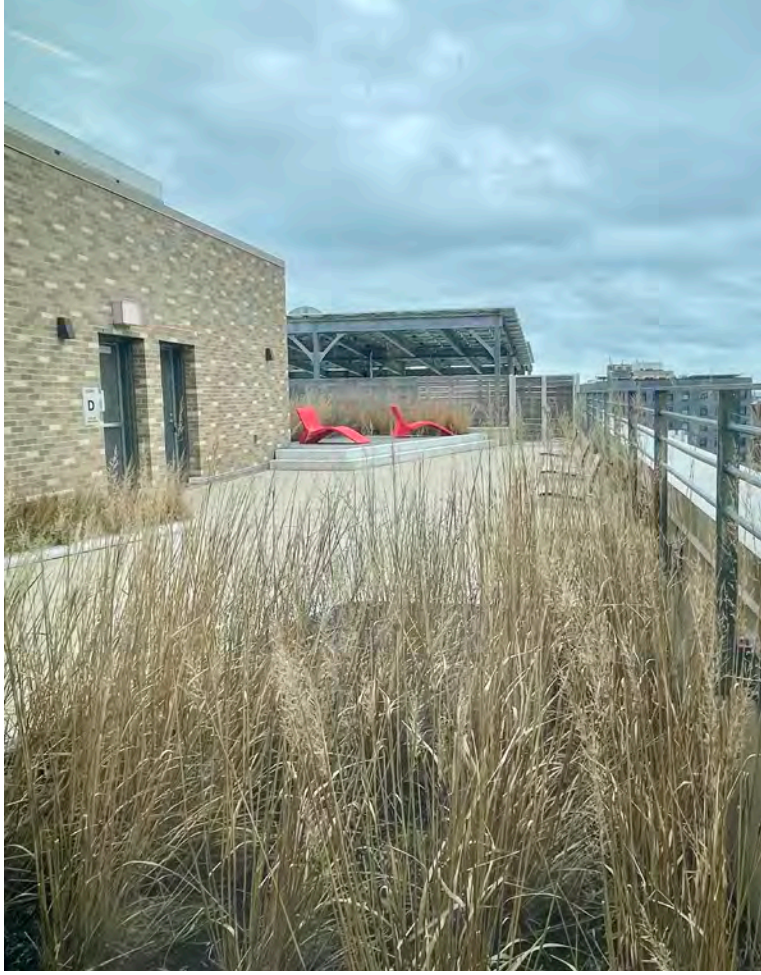
Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Neighborhood revitalization and integration with surrounding communities.

Rockaway Village is situated on a 9.2-acre site that was previously an abandoned strip mall and parking lot. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the community had campaigned for an urban renewal project that would invest in economic revitalization and meet the need for affordable housing in this under-resourced area. The project was developed with extensive community engagement and was made feasible by a rezoning that allowed for higher density and building heights. The overall development concept for Rockaway Village aims to create an attractive, vibrant, and connected community that will breathe new life into the downtown area of Far Rockaway.

The design and scope of Rockaway Village represents new vision for how subsidized housing can connect and serve the well-being of both its occupants and the wider community. The car parking that was previously on this site has been moved underground, allowing the site to be fully walkable and seamlessly integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods. Rockaway Village is not a gated community (apart from the secure entrances to the apartment buildings and the interior courtyards and amenities specifically for residents). A new tree-lined arterial street, pedestrian plaza, public library, grocery store, primary healthcare facility, social services center, and shops/restaurants (in 115,000 sq.ft. of retail space) will serve everyone in the area, creating a new social and commercial hub for the larger community. Rockway Village is connected to public transit at both ends of the development (with the LIRR commuter rail line at one end and the New York City Subway at the other end), providing its residents with easy transit connections to employment and services in other parts of the city. Stable housing, employment, and services lay the foundation for residents to build a life and to build wealth for future generations.

The overall development concept is to create an attractive, vibrant, and connected community that will breathe new life into the downtown of Far Rockaway.



Dignity and the transformative power of a well-designed community.

Rockaway Village encompasses six newly created city blocks, defined by a tree-lined main arterial street and two cross streets, with a large, landscaped public plaza at the project's gateway (which is shared with the wider neighborhood). The buildings vary in height and façade – differentiated by staggered door and window alignments, stepped forms, and color variations – while the brick exteriors (using 27 color gradients) create visual coherence for the whole development. The overall design cultivates an attractive streetscape and a high-quality look that is more typically found in upscale city neighborhoods – a deliberate attempt to move away from the monotonous high-rise towers traditionally associated with public housing. Breezeways and interior courtyards (with extensive greenery and plantings) connect the arterial street and public spaces to each of the eight apartment buildings, with each building cluster having its own unique flow, design, identity, and amenities.

The building interiors and apartments are also designed with high-quality and attractive materials. Each building has a large lobby, with marble concierge desks, wooden mailboxes, custom watercolor murals, and floor-to-ceiling windows for daylight and visual connectivity to the outdoor spaces. The apartments are very spacious, with wood flooring, stainless steel appliances, oversized windows, and air conditioning (features that are not typical in traditional NYC affordable housing). As Deputy Borough President of Queens, Ebony Young, told the GWI research team during a field visit, living in a high-quality place makes people feel that they are respected, that they are worth it, and that they belong to this community. This is the kind of built environment that can instill pride and agency in individuals, which in turn can change behaviors, life trajectories, and the entire community.

Rockaway Village aims to provide its residents with safe and free spaces for exercise, social activities, and mental respite, as well as access to fresh foods, healthcare, and social services.

Meeting residents where they are in the wellness context.

The wellness features and amenities at Rockaway Village speak to the importance of putting wellness in the context of the needs and situations of the development's occupants. It is not necessary to have luxury fitness programming, an infrared sauna, an exclusive wellness club, a specially designed meditation room, a farm-to-table restaurant, circadian lighting, and advanced smart-home technology in order to be considered "wellness real estate." Rockaway Village addresses the most pressing physical wellness needs of its residents by providing facilities such as a basic and free on-site gym, outdoor and indoor play spaces for children, on-site primary healthcare facilities, a full-scale grocery store that sells fresh produce, and enhanced walkability. Social wellness is facilitated via the clustering of the residential towers around communal internal courtyards and outdoor seating and play spaces, the large and attractive lobbies, as well as shared laundry rooms and other indoor spaces. Rockaway Village addresses its residents' mental wellness through design features that create a sense of safety, for example, having single entry point and secure building entrances with 24/7 staffed concierge desks. Providing direct external ventilation for HVAC units in each apartment reduces sound transmission from unit-to-unit, helping to reduce noise and enhance mental well-being. Economic wellness will be addressed through expansion of affordable housing options (i.e., opportunities for local residents to move from outdated and rundown housing into newly built homes with more amenities and services), as well as the future Opportunity Center, which will offer social services that address the specific needs of the community (e.g., employment assistance, workforce training, financial literacy, and summer youth programming). Environmental wellness is addressed through the enforcement of an entirely smoke-free development, ensuring that the newly constructed units are free of lead and mold, and sustainability features like solar panels on the rooftops and Energy Star appliances.

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- On-site fitness center (free to use for all residents).
- Pedestrian-friendly design and connection to active transit options that did not previously exist on this site.
- Bike storage lockers and connectivity to protected bike lines.
- Entirely smoke-free development.
- New, state-of-the-art healthcare facility, which will provide primary care, women's health, dental, and vision services.
- New, full-service grocery store that will sell fresh produce.

Mental & Spiritual

- Oversized windows in each apartment for natural light and outdoor views.
- HVAC units in each apartment have direct ventilation to the outdoors, helping to reduce noise transmission.
- Single entry-point access to each building, with 24/7 staffed concierge desks to ensure security.
- The new on-site healthcare facility will provide mental health services.
- Tree-lined streets and extensive plantings/greenery in plazas and courtyards provide connection to nature.
- High-quality interior and exterior design and finishes, along with extensive services and amenities, help build a sense of dignity and pride among residents.

Social

- Public plaza outside the buildings (with attractive seating areas, landscaping, and greenery) provides new social spaces for connecting with the community.
- Shared internal courtyards/terraces within the building clusters (with secure entry) encourage socializing and recreation.
- Multiple outdoor play areas and indoor playrooms for children and families.
- Party/multipurpose rooms in each building (with indoor and outdoor spaces), for use by all residents.
- Large/attractive lobbies, shared laundry rooms, and other communal areas provide spaces for social connections with neighbors.

Civic & Community

- New public library branch on-site.
- Outdoor public plazas and 115,000 sq.ft. of retail and commercial space (including a grocery store, primary healthcare facility, and shops/restaurants) will serve everyone in the area, creating a new social and commercial hub for the larger community.
- New on-site Opportunity Center will provide social services serving everyone in the area.
- Site design creates a newly connected and vibrant neighborhood to revitalize the under-served downtown area of Far Rockaway.

Environmental

- Air conditioning with external ventilation for all apartments ensures safe indoor air and thermal comfort.
- New construction ensures that units are free from lead and mold (which are major issues in older public housing developments).
- Walkable and transit-oriented development, with easy connectivity to subway, commuter rail, and bus.
- Rooftop solar panels.

Economic & Financial

- Expansion of affordable housing options: units are primarily available, via lottery, to people who make 30-80% of the area median income ($21,000-$102,000 for a family of three in 2024). 50% of units are reserved for local residents, while 15% are reserved for formerly unhoused households, and 5% are reserved for NYC employees.
- A new Opportunity Center will provide programs that enhance economic opportunities, including job placement, workforce development, financial literacy, STEM education, summer youth employment, and other services.

Website References

- https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/details/2563
- https://thenyhc.org/projects/rockaway-village/
- https://www.phippsny.org/map_directory/rockaway-village/

Spring Creek Towers

Brooklyn (New York City), New York, United States

Photo Courtesy of Spring Creek Towers

- Renovation of a large-scale urban affordable apartments and mixed-use community
- 150-acre site (including 110+ acres of green space and parks)
- 8.2 million sq.ft. building area, including multifamily residential, 8 parking garages, 125,000 sq.ft. retail center, public schools, fitness/community center, etc.
- 5,881 residential units (studios, 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms) in 46 apartment buildings
- 16,000-18,000 residents
- Unit prices: 100% affordable community (Section 8 rents are subsidized so residents pay only 30% of adjusted household income; non-Section 8 units are $1,000-$2,200/month)
- Opened in 1974; renovations started in 2018
- Owners and operators: Brooksville Company, Rockpoint, Twin Pines Management
- Certifications: 2 Star Fitwel Rating – Community Scorecard (2021, 2024); Fitwel – Best In Building Leadership (2025)

Spring Creek Towers is one of the largest privately owned, federally subsidized multifamily rental communities in the United States. First established in 1974 under New York State's Mitchell-Lama affordable housing program, the development was originally known as Starrett City and is still referred to as such by long-time residents. Located in the Brooklyn Borough of New York City, Spring Creek Towers is situated on 150 acres of land next to Jamaica Bay. The development encompasses 46 high-rise apartment buildings, with 5,881 units, providing homes to an estimated 16,000-18,000 residents. It has a standalone power plant, approximately 90-person public safety unit, 100,000 sq.ft. fitness and community facility, 125,000 sq.ft. of retail space, two public schools, and over 110 acres of community parks and green spaces.

In 2018, Spring Creek Towers was acquired by Brooksville Company and Rockpoint. In two agreements with New York State, the owners pledged to complete significant capital improvements and to extend affordability protections through at least 2069 (under the New York State Mitchell-Lama program). As of the summer of 2025, the owners have already invested more than $250 million in capital improvements and are committed to continuing their work. The owners, who have a specialty in operating large, complex multifamily communities, have stated that their strategy is to improve the quality of life for residents through strategic infrastructure investments, increasing operational efficiencies, and direct and consistent engagement with tenants and community leaders. To improve the health of the community, Spring Creek Towers partnered with Fitwel and achieved a 2 Star Rating in 2021, becoming the first property in New York State to certify on Fitwel's Community scorecard. Spring Creek Towers was also the first affordable housing development in the world to earn this rating. Spring Creek Towers successfully recertified in 2024, and in 2025, was also awarded the "Best in Building Health Leadership" award for the "most people impacted" of any certified community.

Spring Creek Towers is one of the largest privately owned, federally subsidized multifamily rental communities in the United States.

Photo Courtesy of Spring Creek Towers

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Upgraded basic infrastructure as a foundation for quality of life.

When Brooksville and Rockpoint acquired Spring Creek Towers, the property was in dire need of capital investment, and residents' quality of life was suffering as a result. The 50-year-old power plant was aging, and the underground piping for heating/cooling and hot water delivery was inefficient and leaking, leading to prolonged disruptions. Extended power outages happened frequently, and there was no capacity for backup electricity generation. Every year, residents' "thermal comfort" was compromised during the early summer and early fall because it could take up to two months each season for the team to transition between heating and air conditioning. Many other aspects of the community infrastructure were in need of significant investment, including: the fitness and community center, the garages, the playgrounds, and the outdoor asphalt and pavement. The owners have already invested over $100 million to modernize the power plant and the entire utility infrastructure, which is now delivering higher performance, better reliability, lower energy consumption, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. The switch from heating to cooling now takes less than 72 hours instead of two months, and residents are now receiving more consistent and higher quality utility services. During the summer of 2025, when NYC experienced significantly elevated heat levels, Spring Creek Towers received its lowest number of cooling complaints from residents since it began tracking this information.

Brooksville and Rockpoint implemented numerous other infrastructure improvements throughout the community, including: upgraded garages, completion of Local Law 11 façade work, a property-wide roof replacement project, and sanitary piping replacement. Additionally, the owners have several new upgrades and projects that are just getting underway, including updated kitchen appliances for every unit, renovating all lobbies and corridors, upgrading landscaping and streetscapes, and upgrading playgrounds and outdoor sports areas. The owners also invested over $7 million to renovate and re-open the Brooklyn Sports Club, a 100,000 sq.ft. fitness and community facility that is open and affordable to both residents and the general public. Non-resident membership rates average $48/month, but residents are paying a discounted rate of $35/month on average. Youths and seniors are eligible for discounted or free memberships. Importantly, the facility improvements and expanded programming have increased the

sports club membership to nearly 4,000, making the facilities available to a wider range of community members. The sports club, along with the tree-filled green spaces, public parks and playgrounds, walking paths, and outdoor sports courts, offer residents of Spring Creek Towers plenty of space and opportunities for recreation, mental respite, connection to nature, and family/social activities. The development is also adjacent to the recently opened, 407-acre Shirley Chisholm State Park on Jamaica Bay, with 10 miles of biking/hiking trails, free bike rentals, birdwatching, fishing, shoreline access, and a diverse coastal/wetland ecosystem with ample wildlife.

Operational efficiency improves well-being for residents.

In a large and complex community like Spring Creek Towers, management and operational efficiency can have a huge impact on residents' well-being. Yet, in publicly subsidized housing, tenants are often deprived of the kind of customer service that is accorded to those living in market-priced buildings. For decades, resident issues and maintenance requests at Spring Creek Towers had been handled inefficiently (e.g. on paper and Post-It notes), and residents often felt that their calls and complaints went unheeded. One of the major improvements made by ownership was the construction of a new office to better house its core administrative team, which leads the 400+ management and operations staff. This new office space consolidated team members to support improved communication and collaboration, allowing the team to better serve residents while also creating a professional place of business to best assist residents with their housing needs. They also invested over $4 million in new IT infrastructure and upgraded equipment to support a modernized property management and work order and inventory management system, which supports the processing and tracking of maintenance requests. The team also opened a dedicated customer service call center to handle all non-emergency calls for resident questions, complaints, and maintenance requests. Informally referred to as "311 for Starrett" (a reference to NYC's 311 system for all non-emergency calls), the customer service center handles approximately 2,000 calls per week and can help residents with issues such as: (i) scheduling a work order; (ii) reading/understanding a rent bill; (iii) making an appointment with a recertification specialist; (iv) providing information about upcoming construction projects on site; and (v) connecting the resident with a senior level manager to address more in-depth/complicated issues.

Photo Courtesy of Spring Creek Towers

Photo Courtesy of Spring Creek Towers

In 2024, the urban farm produced 1,300 pounds of organic produce, to increase food security among residents and to share with the SUNY Downstate Medical Center for its "food as medicine" program.

Historically, a major area of friction for residents was the annual income verification process required to confirm their continuing eligibility for federal and state government housing subsidies. In the past, residents had to queue up around the block starting at dawn, to wait for their turn to present their paperwork and be interviewed. It was a big source of frustration for residents, and the experience was undignified and onerous for those not able to take that much time away from their jobs. The ownership team felt it was offensive how pervasive the lack of respect in the treatment of residents has been in this business for a long time. The new owners changed this process to an appointment-based system and got rid of the long lines. The new management office is designed with eight private meeting rooms, where tenants can privately share their documents and personal information (e.g., medical bills, and other paperwork related to unemployment, divorce, alimony, child support, etc.). The improved process and the consideration for tenants' privacy and time demonstrates respect for everyone in the community.

Harnessing the urban farm for multiple wellness benefits.

On the grounds of Spring Creek Towers is an 8,000 sq.ft. (0.2 acre) organic urban farm with 24 raised planter beds, tended by a full-time farm manager. In 2024, the farm's first year of production, it produced 1,300 pounds of organic produce. This output is expected to multiply with the planned expansion of the farm to half an acre and 80 beds, 12 fruit trees, and new dedicated planters for berries. The urban farm helps to improve community health and well-being in multiple ways. First and foremost, its helps to increase food security and nutrition for the most vulnerable residents. Most of the produce is distributed to farm volunteers, to residents identified as facing food insecurity by the tenant association, and via the on-site food pantry. The farm also shares its harvest with the SUNY Downstate Medical Center for its "food as medicine" program. Farm volunteers include adults and seniors in the community, with many immigrants who came from rural backgrounds and enjoy being involved in the program. The farm also serves as the base for many educational activities, including youth/senior community nutrition and culinary programs, as well as hands-on gardening and food systems education for local K-8 school students. These efforts, and the general maintenance of the farm, are run by the non-profit organization, The Opportunity Hub, which is based at Spring Creek Towers. The Opportunity Hub is a settlement-house based organization that serves the needs of Spring Creek Towers and the surrounding community. There are future plans to set up a local produce market based at the farm, which will provide additional entrepreneurial and training opportunities for youth in the community. The farm is also developing a research grant with university partners, to study how soil additives affect organic food growing in an urban environment.

Building strong communities through housing stability, investment in youth and seniors, and fostering community pride.

In a moderate-income community like Spring Creek Towers, residents' well-being depends upon housing security and economic opportunities for the next generation. As part of their agreement with the state, ownership established a $10 million rent relief fund to help residents facing financial hardship coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, and they pledged another $10 million in social support services, which are delivered by The Opportunity Hub. In addition to the farm-related activities, The Opportunity Hub runs after-school activities and programming in a dedicated teen/young adult center, staffed by team members from within the community; activities include basketball, fitness, culinary arts, esports, a computer lab, and counseling/mentoring. It provides local residents of all ages with financial literacy and job readiness programs, including on-site tutoring, college prep, resume prep, career coaching, job search assistance, financial/debt management, and more. The Opportunity Hub also organizes community events including an annual career fair, back to school fair, and Thanksgiving turkey and food distribution. Last year, these events collectively attracted over 1,000 residents.

Spring Creek Towers is a multigenerational community with an estimated 4,000 people over the age of 65. Some have lived here all their lives and are seeing the third generation of their families becoming residents. There are two NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities), which are run by two non-profit organizations that receive state and city funding to provide services and programs to help older adults age in place. The Opportunity Hub partners with these nonprofits to deliver targeted programming, such as an older adult garden club, healthy eating, and financial empowerment for seniors, as well as designing activities and sports programming that co-mingle participants of all ages, from youth to seniors. The on-site Brooklyn Sports Club runs a highly subscribed SilverSneakers program (which provides free access to health and fitness facilities for adults 65+ enrolled in Medicare).

With a history spanning over 50 years, the residents of Spring Creek Towers take great pride in being part of an integrated, diverse community. Spring Creek Towers has a very active tenant association, which engages with management regularly to communicate needs, concerns, and priorities, and to advocate for residents. Along with the capital investments and service improvements, management has worked proactively to regain the trust of the community. The Fitwel certification process helped to increase awareness of healthy lifestyle habits and the wellness-enhancing infrastructure that has been upgraded and added. The Opportunity Hub has also accepted stewardship of the 50-year-old community-based newspaper ("Spring Creek Sun"), which will provide opportunities to nurture local talent in journalism and media, while strengthening community cohesion, communication, and pride.

Spring Creek Towers has come a long way from almost a decade ago, when the entire property suffered from significant underinvestment. As one of the largest affordable housing communities in the United States, it presents a unique example of wellness real estate delivered on a massive scale – the size of a small- to medium-sized town – and delivered specifically for low- to mid-income, multigenerational, and multicultural residents. It also stands out as a compelling example of how to accomplish a healthy built environment not through new, purpose-built wellness real estate, but rather through thoughtful, ongoing investment in the renovation and upgrading of existing infrastructure, accompanied by supportive services and programming that address the wellness needs of a longstanding community.

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Pedestrian-friendly design and connections to public transit.
- More than 110 acres of well-distributed green spaces, walking paths, playgrounds, parks, and sports courts for outdoor recreation.
- On-site, newly renovated and reopened Brooklyn Sports Club – a 100,000 sq.ft. fitness/community center with very low monthly fee (averaging $48/month for non-residents or $35/month for residents). Facilities for all ages include a well-equipped gym and fitness area, swimming pool, basketball court, group exercise programming, a SilverSneakers senior exercise program, and a historic boxing gym.
- Recreation programs for youth, including basketball, Judo club, and a fencing studio (with classes taught by a locally raised Olympian).
- Adjacent to the 407-acre Shirley Chisholm State Park and Jamaica Bay, with ample opportunities for outdoor recreation and connection to nature.
- Organic produce available from the on-site urban farm (1,300 lbs. harvested in 2024), distributed to community members and a local "food as medicine" program.
- On-site full-service grocery store that supplies fresh produce.
- Nutrition and culinary programs for seniors and youth, run by the on-site nonprofit.
- Improved reliability of hot water, heat, and air conditioning systems across the community, as a result of upgrades to the on-site power plant and utility infrastructure.
- 24/7 patrol by the on-site public safety force, which focuses on positive community relations and cultivating safety.

Mental & Spiritual

- Apartments have ample natural light and views of nature and green spaces.
- Well-maintained and tree-filled public parks and seating areas throughout the development, providing mental respite and connection to nature.
- Improved resident satisfaction with a dedicated "311 line" and customer service team that responds to questions, complaints, and requests for service/maintenance, along with increased maintenance efficiency through upgraded IT and tracking work order systems.
- Respect for residents' time and privacy in the annual income verification process, by installing an advance appointment system (instead of requiring residents to queue up for hours) and providing private rooms for resident interviews and document review.
- Full-time, on-site social workers who can make referrals for mental health and social services.

Social

- Green spaces, parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities surrounding the buildings (with ample tree shade and seating) provide attractive spaces for socializing and meeting neighbors.
- Daily after-school programs and youth/young adult programming run by The Opportunity Hub in a dedicated facility that provides teen-friendly spaces for socializing. Programs include basketball, culinary arts, esports, computer lab, etc.
- On-site senior center and activities for 65+ residents/NORCs (naturally occurring retirement communities), including volunteering at the urban farm.
- Senior centers and The Opportunity Hub partner to offer intergenerational activities and programming.
- After-school programming provided for local youth through other nonprofits located on-site.

Civic & Community

- An integrated, diverse community with multiethnic and multigenerational residents.
- On-site senior center/NORC services enable the 4,000 older residents to age in place, with social services, health management/referrals, etc.
- Regular management meetings with the tenant association to listen to residents' concerns, gauge customer satisfaction, and calibrate services and programming.
- Supporting and relaunching the "Spring Creek Sun" – a community newspaper that has been in operation since 1974 – to strengthen community cohesion and pride while nurturing local talent in journalism and media.

Environmental

- $100 million investment in a new high-efficiency gas-fired boiler heating system led to significant improvements in energy efficiency and related savings (81% improvement of the fuel-to-hot water efficiency), while lowering carbon emissions and improving air quality (91% reduction in NOx emissions) and also improving reliability for residents.
- Investments in decentralizing the water heating system significantly reduced the water loss that was occurring due to leakages in the aging pipes.
- Addition of backup generators to enable the power plant team to provide increased electrical reliability and to conduct proactive preventative maintenance of equipment.

Economic & Financial

- Housing security for residents, with apartment rents subsidized by the U.S. federal government Section 8 affordable housing program (qualified tenants typically pay 30% of their monthly adjusted household income).
- One-time rent relief fund in 2021 for residents facing financial hardships.
- Public education provided through two on-site K-8 public schools and preschool programs (pre-K and 3-K).
- The Opportunity Hub (on-site nonprofit and social services) provides financial literacy and job readiness programs for youth through seniors, including training, tutoring, college prep, resume prep, career coaching, job search assistance, annual job fairs, financial/debt management, etc.
- On-site 125,000 sq.ft. retail center provides essential community services and businesses (e.g., bank, dry cleaning, pharmacy, small shops and restaurants, post office, etc.).

Website References

- https://www.springcreektowers.com
- https://www.theopphub.org/

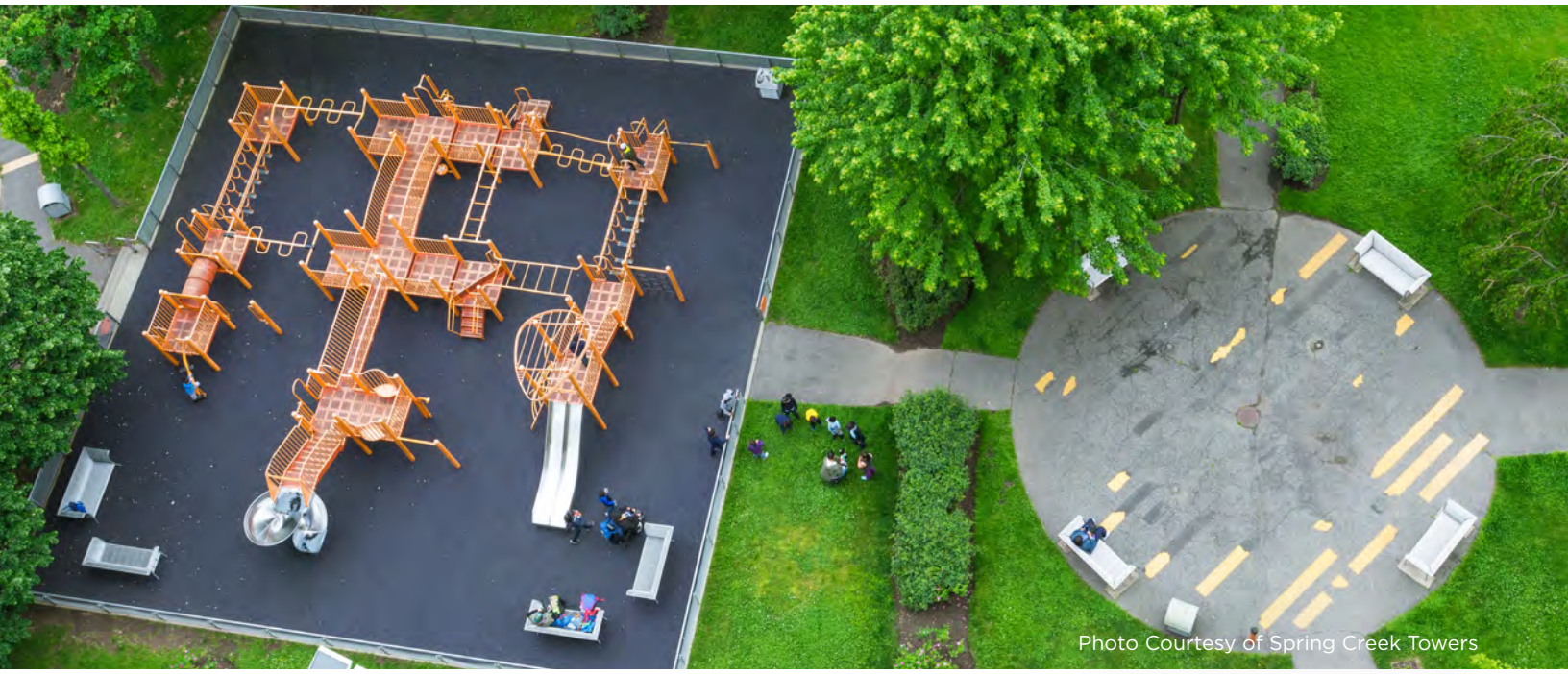


Photo Courtesy of Spring Creek Towers

The Mather, Tysons

Fairfax County (Greater Washington, DC), Virginia, United States

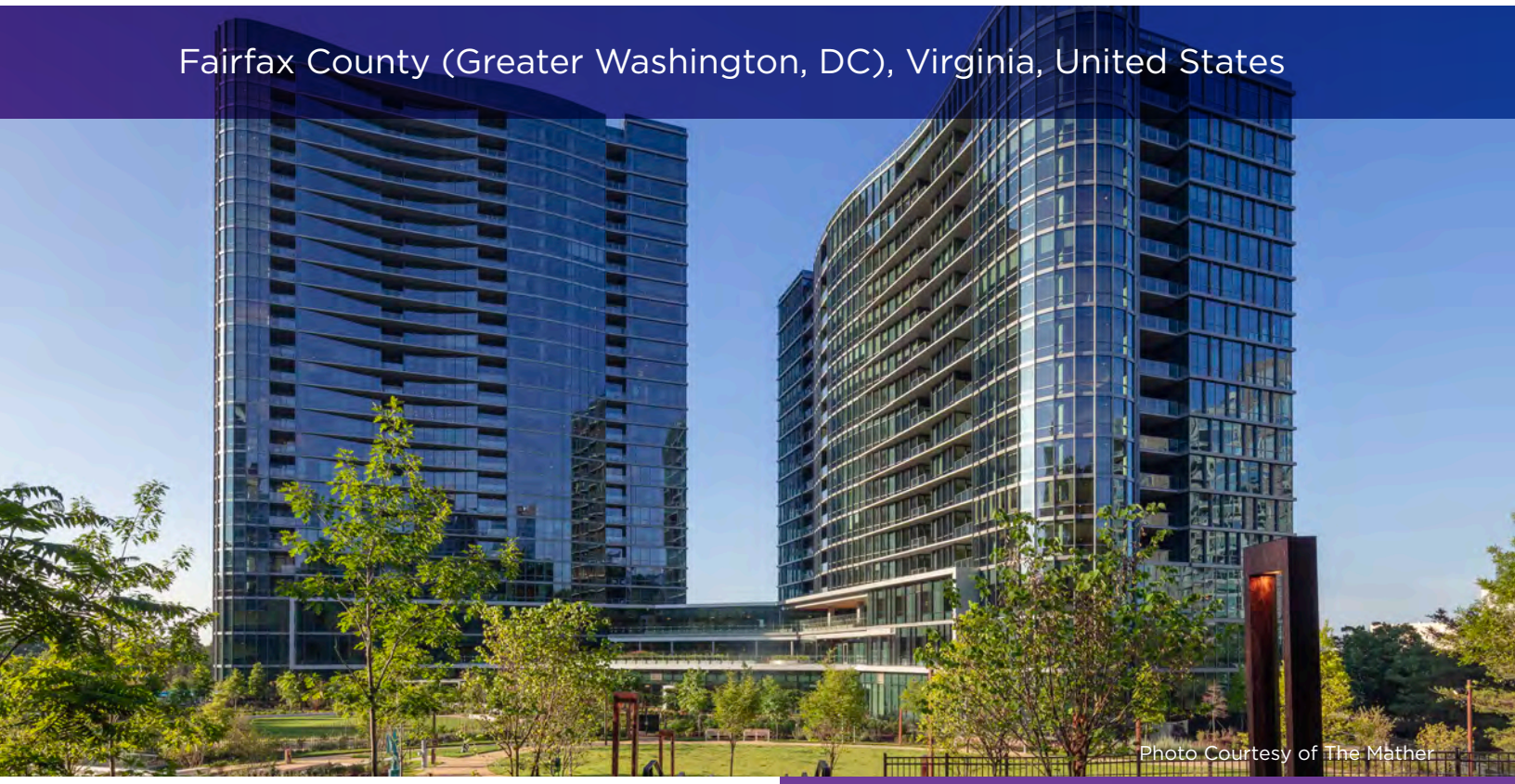


Photo Courtesy of The Mather

The Mather in Tysons, VA, is the fourth project by Mather, a not-for-profit with 80+ years' experience in building and operating luxury senior living communities. The Mather is located in the Tysons area of Fairfax County, Virginia, a major suburban community about 12 miles northwest of downtown Washington, DC. Similar to other Mather communities in Illinois and Arizona, the Tysons project is a Life Plan Community, which provides a continuum of living options from independent apartment living to assisted living, memory support, and skilled nursing. The development encompasses 293 apartment homes spread across two high-rise buildings, connected by 38,000 square feet of amenities, along with 14,000 square feet of retail and a 3-acre park accessible to the wider community. Residents began moving into the first building in March 2024, and into the second building in September 2024.

- Life Plan Community (62+ independent living, assisted living, memory support, skilled nursing)
- 4-acre site (including a 3-acre park)
- 670,000 sq.ft. building area, including 14,000+ sq.ft. ground-floor retail/commercial space
- 293 residential units (from 1-2 bedrooms to penthouses) in two high-rise buildings
- Unit prices: $700,000–$4.8m
- Opened in 2024
- Developer: Mather
- Certifications: WELL certification in progress, LEED Gold pre-certified

Photo Courtesy of The Mather

The Mather offers multisensory experiences, with much of its amenities and programming informed by research at its affiliated nonprofit Mather Institute.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Holistic wellness approaches, informed by Mather Institute research.

The Mather offers extensive amenities and programming that resemble the offerings of luxury wellness resorts, with 38,000 square feet of indoor amenity spaces in a concourse that connects the two residential towers. Amenities encompass the "basics," including a fitness center, indoor saltwater pool, and a group exercise and Pilates studio, along with more sophisticated wellness amenities, including a day spa, a "breath lounge" with salt therapy, an infrared sauna, AI-powered body composition analysis, and a live herb wall for making custom teas and scrubs. The Mather offers a wide range of programs that address residents' physical, mental, and social wellness, including art studio classes, bocce ball, beekeeping, hydroponic gardening, outdoor concerts, and lectures/workshops. In addition, the Mather offers multisensory wellness experiences, such as in-pool guided meditations while listening to a live cellist and crystal singing bowls, and a community-wide olfactory journey curated by Comfort Zone. Many of the offerings have been informed by the affiliated Mather Institute (founded 26 years ago), which conducts applied research on aging well and translates findings into actionable programs. For example, Mather Institute research informed the development of programming related to mindful eating, wellness coaching, and volunteering. It also inspired the acquisition of pneumatic strength training equipment beneficial to older adult exercisers, as well as a vibroacoustic sound wave bed that can help to improve sleep and symptoms of stress and anxiety.

Person-centric wellness (don't call it senior living).

According to CEO Mary Leary, the approach at The Mather shifts from a traditional senior living focus to a focus on wellness lifestyles and experiences, engaging residents in wellness self-discovery. Developed in collaboration with Mather Institute, The Mather adopts a "person-centric wellness model" that emphasizes autonomy, achievement, and affiliation. It is not a passive community focused on leisure, but rather a community that intentionally sees older adults as intellectually curious and active, and as community members who value cultural diversity, active engagement, and sustainability. These values are reflected throughout its design, diverse cuisines and dining options, wellness amenities, and programming. The Mather also incorporates smart-home technology in all residential units, as well as other forms of innovative building automation, such as robots that vacuum, bring food/deliveries to residents' homes, and bus tables in the restaurants.

Photo Courtesy of The Mather

Integrating biophilic design and nature in a metropolitan setting.

Located in the densely populated suburbs of Washington, DC, The Mather emphasizes nature in an urban setting by incorporating biophilic design in all aspects of the development, from apartment homes and recreational spaces to restaurants and programming. Interior finishes use materials and colors that evoke nature (such natural wood and stone, soothing blue-green colors, and the juxtaposition of curves and straight lines). Indoor amenities are physically and visually connected to outdoor spaces and make ample use of natural light and materials. All apartment homes have open floor plans with floor-to-ceiling windows to maximize natural light. A 3-acre, publicly accessible urban park abuts the residential towers, creating new green and walkable spaces within a neighborhood that has long been known for its dense, car-centric, office park design. The park incorporates sculptures using natural materials, a dog park, bocce and badminton courts, a lawn for outdoor concerts, and walking trails that connect the development to the wider neighborhood. The park also provides a space for nature immersion programming, such as forest bathing, tai chi and qigong, yoga, and beekeeping.

Community connections and partnerships that bring wellness to all.

The Mather has been developed in partnership with Fairfax County, Virginia, and brings important wellness resources and services to benefit the surrounding community. The project is located within the larger 19-acre Arbor Row mixed-use, transit-oriented development, which is part of a regional initiative to convert Tysons from a congested, office-dominated, and car-centric suburb to a more vibrant, walkable, green, and active neighborhood. The 3-acre urban park at The Mather is open and accessible to the local community, and the 14,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor is also open to the general public. The Mather has collaborated with county government to provide a community center that will offer extensive wellness programming for residents 50 years and older in Fairfax County. Programming – which includes fitness, creative arts, and lifelong learning – has been developed via community input, with an opening date in May 2025.

Measurable Impacts

Wellness impacts:

Mather Institute's Person-Centric Wellness assessment tool evaluates Autonomy (choice), Achievement (purpose), and Affiliation (engagement), which informs staff regarding the extent to which residents believe they have access to wellness resources that enable them to pursue their personal wellness journey. The assessment also measures aspects such as the degree to which Mather provides choice/flexibility/individualized experiences.

Staff at The Mather utilize numerous performance indicators to measure wellness for residents, including collection of baseline information through AI body composition analysis – enabling development of personalized wellness programs and self-accountability through ongoing measurement. Staff also measure baseline mobility/balance and the impact of ongoing balance/strength building exercises.

Business impacts:

The Mather is a future-focused, wellness-infused residential community designed to serve a younger, more diverse demographic than has traditionally been served in senior living. The success of The Mather's value proposition is reflected by the younger generations and diverse older adults who have moved in – 75% of residents are Boomers or Gen Xers. The Mather's amenities, programs, and rituals are also attracting residents' children who are joining in the experiences, reinforcing that these are the desires of the residents of tomorrow. The Mather achieved 90% pre-sales prior to opening, significantly better than industry benchmarks. In under 10 months from its grand opening, The Mather moved in approximately 400 residents. As a result of the high occupancy rate, Mather paid off its construction loan six months ahead of schedule.

The Mather achieved 90% pre-sales prior to opening and paid off its construction loan six months ahead of schedule.

Photo Courtesy of The Mather

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Age-sensitive, research-based fitness amenities and programming, such as pneumatic equipment and percussive therapy tools.
- Healthy, culturally diverse culinary options offered in four on-site restaurants.
- Marzenia, a full-service day spa with holistic therapies that include traditional Chinese medicine, chiropractic, touchless wellness therapies, and more.
- Holistic wellness offerings akin to those offered at luxury wellness resorts, such as salt therapy, body composition analysis, compression therapy, and multisensory wellness experiences.
- No return air recirculated within community (100% outside air).
- Elevators containing germicidal air purification systems.

Mental & Spiritual

- Biophilic design infused into the development from the ground-up, aiming to maximize natural light and encourage interaction with nature and the outdoors.
- Nature immersion programs incorporating wellness practices from around the globe such as forest bathing, outdoor qigong and tai chi practice, and Wyda (Celtic movement theory).
- Extensive art installation throughout the development, including public/outdoor art that utilizes natural materials, as well as a curated collection of artwork, sculptures, and antiquities from around the world that reflect the themes of connection, unity, and nature.
- Creative and intellectual programming, including art studio programs, lectures, concerts, and resident-led social clubs.
- Cultural diversity and inclusiveness in design, programming, and culinary options.

Social

- 3-acre, publicly accessible outdoor park and recreation area offering a variety of programming and activities (walking paths, dog park, bocce ball, badminton, table tennis, gardening plots, sculpture gardens, concerts), which encourage resident interaction with the wider community.
- Shuttle service to area shopping centers, banks, and grocery stores for residents.

Civic & Community

- New community center offers wellness and lifelong learning programs open to all 50+ year old residents in Fairfax Country.
- Ground-level retail open to the local community.
- 3-acre park is open to the local community and connects to regional parks, trail systems, and transit.
- The overall development supports the vision of Fairfax County to make the Tysons region a more green, walkable, active, and vibrant community.

Environmental

- LEED Gold pre-certified.
- Emphasis on biophilic design and use of natural materials throughout.
- 3-acre park provides new green space and walkability in a neighborhood that has long been car-centric.
- Triple stacking automobile parking to mitigate urban heat island effect.
- Built-in smart-home technology.
- Electric vehicle charging stations.

Economic & Financial

- A “Life Plan” community, in which residents are able to live in the community for life.
- One time entrance fee, 90% refundable.
- Inclusive monthly fee covers wellness amenities, programs, biweekly housekeeping, 24/7 concierge, dining, and more.
- Optional life care is built into the monthly fee.

Website Reference

- https://www.themathertysons.com/

The Pearl

Silver Spring (Greater Washington, DC), Maryland, United States

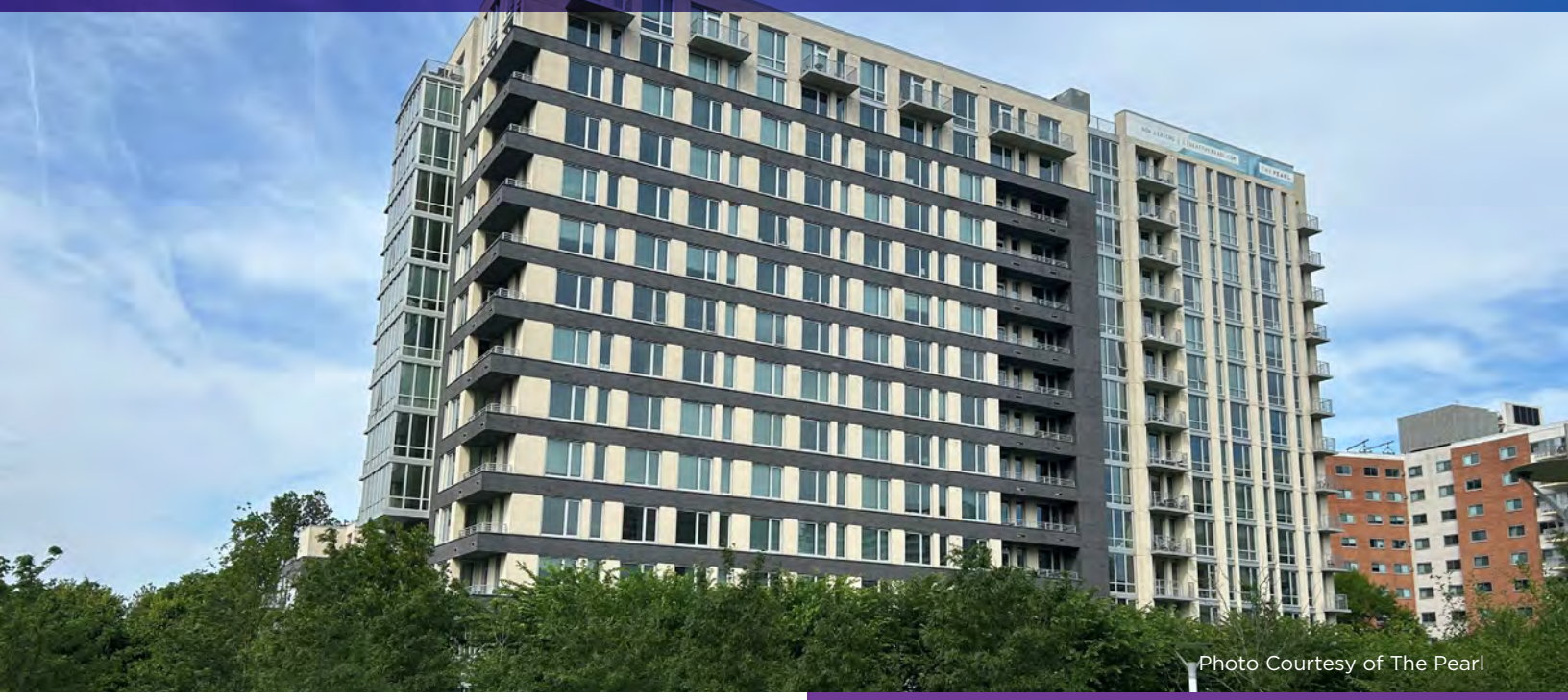


Photo Courtesy of The Pearl

The Pearl is a 284-unit, Class A apartment community located near downtown Silver Spring, Maryland, within the greater Washington, DC, metro area. When it opened in 2017, it was the first completed building in the 20-year master plan for Silver Spring's historic Blairs District, which calls for 2,800 high-rise apartments in the 27-acre redevelopment site (as of August 2025, the apartment count including The Pearl is 1,396 units). The Blairs District master plan is intended to transform a 1960s-style development into a vibrant, transit-oriented, healthy, and sustainable live-work-play community, in close proximity to parks and green space. The Pearl and the Blairs District are both developed and operated by The Tower Companies, a 78-year-old, family-owned real estate development company based in Maryland and a national leader in pioneering green and healthy buildings. In 2018, The Pearl became the

- Urban Class A multifamily community
- 3.3-acre site (including 30,000 sq.ft. of outdoor amenity spaces and a 2-acre park)
- 317,000 sq.ft. building (14 stories)
- 284 residential units for lease (from studios to 3 bedrooms)
- Unit prices: $1,833-$5,311/month
- Opened in 2017
- Developer and operator: The Tower Companies (and designed by Design Collective)
- Certifications: Fitwel 2 Star Multifamily Residential (2018, 2024), LEED Gold

Photo Courtesy of John Harrington

first project in the world to receive the Fitwel Multifamily Residential certification, and it was subsequently recertified in 2024. Building on the success of The Pearl, The Tower Companies became a Fitwel Champion in 2018, and in 2024, it obtained certifications at five additional properties in Maryland and Washington, DC.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Designing for wellness from the ground up.

The Pearl was intentionally designed with wellness in mind, and the development team engaged with the Center for Active Design to integrate active design, healthy design, and biophilic features from the outset. The massing and heights of the interconnected building segments were strategically adjusted to blend into the neighborhood character and respond to the natural heights of the surrounding areas: along Eastern Avenue, a lower five-story building faces a street of single-family homes; on the other side, it steps up to eight and then 14 stories as it faces the higher density downtown Silver Spring area. The stepped massing of the buildings also helps to maximize daylight exposure in the interior courtyard and units, and it provides unobstructed views to the nearby Rock Creek Park.

The Pearl has several outdoor amenity spaces, including an interior courtyard with a large outdoor kitchen, grilling area with party seating, and native landscaping; a rooftop terrace with a garden and swimming pool; and a large park surrounding the building (with a playground, outdoor fitness equipment, picnic area, and urban farm). The exterior plantings and a 5,000 sq.ft. green roof are designed for storm water management, catching and diverting runoff from flowing into Rock Creek, a protected waterway. All of the indoor amenity and social spaces are designed to maximize views of the outdoor green spaces through oversized windows. The corridors and windows on each floor are positioned to provide views while occupants are waiting for the elevators or moving through the building. Instead of being banished to the basement, an oversized fitness center is designed as a two-story “floating” structure that includes a yoga and cycling studio, cardio center, and cross-fit zone, and with expansive outdoor views and natural daylight. The Pearl is situated in a transit-friendly corridor, with easy pedestrian access to the Silver Spring subway and commuter rail station. To support active transit and low-carbon commutes, the project is equipped with ample bike storage and electric vehicle charging stations.

Embedding wellness in ongoing operations and programming.

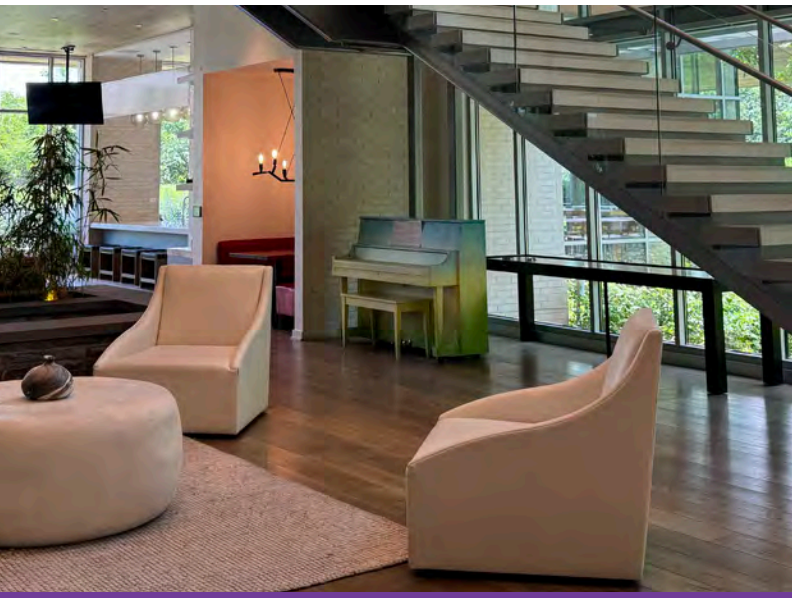
In addition to its bricks and mortar design, The Pearl excels in the kinds of operations and programming that put the holistic health of its residents at the core of its management. For example, while the lobby stairway was designed and positioned to be open and inviting, the building management added signage (including at the elevator call area) to encourage stair use; in the interior stairwells, specially commissioned artwork was added on every other floor to make the stairways look interesting and feel safe.

The Pearl hosts a 5,000 sq.ft. urban farm, which produces about 2,000 pounds of produce each growing season. Instead of running it as a community garden or a fee-based community supported agriculture program, the farm is professionally managed and serves as a wellness amenity for the entire building – produce is distributed freely to residents on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents who like gardening can also do so at a nearby community garden that serves the entire Blairs District. The building hosts pop-up dinners and cooking demonstrations in the lobby's communal kitchen, with healthy meals prepared by professional chefs using harvests from the urban farm. This program fosters community building and teaches residents about the importance of supporting local farmers and healthy cooking practices. In addition to the regular fitness classes offered in the gym, The Pearl operates a "Lifestyles Program" to build community through healthful activities such as berry picking, pet walks, and walks to Rock Creek Park, and it hosts events in coordination with the apartment buildings at The Blairs District.

Flexibility is key to delivering an optimal experience for residents. Since The Pearl was built prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, its extensive lobby and amenity spaces were originally designed for both social activities and quiet relaxation. The shift to remote work brought on by the pandemic significantly altered residents' demand and use for these spaces. To reflect this change, The Pearl has reconfigured the seating areas and added new cubicles/pods designated for remote workers, and they converted some space into a small, private conference room with teleconference capabilities.

A professionally managed farm serves as a wellness amenity, distributing produce freely to residents on a first-come, first-served basis.

Photo Courtesy of John Harrington



Prosocial design creates a welcoming atmosphere for relaxing. hanging out with friends, or connecting with neighbors.

Prioritizing “ease” over “luxury.”

The leasing rates at The Pearl put its apartments at the higher end of downtown Silver Spring real estate. However, The Pearl is aiming for a relaxed style of holistic wellness living, rather than the vibe of exclusive, luxury hospitality. The prosocial design approaches in the lobby and the indoor and outdoor common areas create a welcoming atmosphere, allowing residents to relax comfortably alone, hang out with friends, entertain guests, or interact with other community residents. For example, a brightly painted upright piano in the lobby invites spontaneous, playful entertainment. Natural and biophilic elements are thoroughly integrated both indoors and outdoors, with floor to ceiling windows throughout the lobby that provide views of the surrounding green areas. The outdoor playground, fitness equipment, tree-shaded sitting areas, and open green fields surrounding the building are blended seamlessly with the building’s interior courtyard and the surrounding streets, creating an atmosphere of openness and connection rather than an exclusive, gated community. Residents can easily walk from The Pearl across the park to the local grocery store, drugstore, restaurants, and other small businesses operating in the nearby retail plaza.

As Luke Lanciano, Director of Sustainability explains, "The residents appreciate and utilize all the on-site amenities, as we don't want The Pearl to feel like a museum." Wellness is thoughtfully and gently woven across the property. Many small details and adjustments – from design and signage to operations – nudge residents toward a healthy and sustainable lifestyle without being "in your face." For example, the building provides services that increase the convenience of earth-friendly behaviors, including compost/recycling bins on every floor, an on-site clothing donation drop box, and on-site lockers for an eco-friendly dry-cleaning pickup/drop-off service. The management team meets every month to discuss heathy building, livability, and safety issues, as well as observations and feedback from residents, to adjust and curate new services. A recently added offering that helps to reduce daily friction is an "equipment rental vending machine," where residents can access small appliances (e.g., a clothing steamer, iron, vacuum cleaner, and other small tools) without having to buy or store them in their apartments.

Measurable Impacts

The Pearl has consistently achieved a 95% occupancy rate and a high lease renewal rate as compared with other Class A multifamily buildings in the area. Many residents noted that the health and wellness features were a factor in their decision to choose the Pearl and to extend their lease.

Many small details and adjustments – from design and signage to operations – nudge residents toward a healthy and sustainable lifestyle without being "in your face."

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Rigorous air filtering and circulation, with proactive monitoring through preventive maintenance programs, tenant comfort reports, tobacco-free policies, and ongoing monitoring of CO2 and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- Property-wide smoke-free policy (both indoors and outdoors), to support good air quality.
- Two-level fitness center with extensive equipment options, a yoga and cycling studio, cardio center, and cross-fit zone (free to use for all residents), with regular class programming.
- Rooftop saltwater pool, terrace, and garden for residents.
- Children's playground and outdoor fitness equipment in the park surrounding the building.
- Strategically located signage and artwork to promote the use of stairs.
- Massive bike storage facility, relative to the number of units in the building (over 100 racks).
- Located in a walkable urban neighborhood with public transit options.
- On-site, professionally run 5,000 sq.ft. urban farm, which shares free fresh produce with building residents. A community garden is also available in the neighborhood.
- Short walk to full-service grocery store.

Mental & Spiritual

- Building is oriented for all units and common areas to maximize natural daylight and views of nature and green space.
- Thoughtful landscaping in the internal courtyard, rooftop plantings and garden, tree-shaded outdoor spaces, and surrounding park encourages the enjoyment of outdoors and connection to nature.
- The flexible indoor and outdoor common spaces accommodate multiple functions: remote work, quiet personal space, business meetings, and social gatherings.
- Single entry-point access, with a 24/7 staffed concierge desk, to ensure security.
- Thoughtful curation of small conveniences that reduce daily friction for residents – e.g., on-site clothing donation bin; "equipment rental vending machine" for small appliances; and an eco-friendly dry-cleaning service with lockers for drop-off and pickup.
- Pet washing station for the convenience of pet owners.

Social

- Prosocial design in common areas – e.g., multiple indoor and outdoor lounging spaces and gathering areas, communal kitchen and grilling facilities for parties and small gatherings, etc.
- Regular social programming to engage building residents and create community. Coordination with nearby buildings to host events for social mingling in the neighborhood.
- Outdoor neighborhood dog park for dog lovers to gather and socialize.

Civic & Community

- Building massing was designed so that the side of the building facing a residential street with single-family homes is intentionally lower rise, in order to blend with the look and feel of the existing neighborhood.
- The outdoor park, green spaces, and recreational areas around the building blend seamlessly into the existing neighborhood and public spaces, in order to blur the boundaries between the property and the community and to create the opposite of a gated community.
- The management team meets regularly to discuss the evolving wellness needs of residents (gathered via tenant feedback and management observation), to add/adjust services and offerings at the property on an ongoing basis.

Environmental

- Strategic plantings on the grounds, along with a 5,000 sq.ft. green roof, are designed for storm water management, preventing runoff into the local waterways (as well as providing better views for residents on higher floors).
- Rooftop solar panels, as well as water and energy efficient appliances and fixtures, for positive environmental impacts.
- Convenient food scrap composting and recycling bins are free for residents, with collection on every floor.
- The building employs a janitorial service/contractor that has a green/healthy cleaning policy.
- The walkable and transit-oriented design of the Blairs District and the surrounding neighborhood helps to reduce car usage and related pollution.
- On-site EV charging stations and bike storage help promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Zip Car carshare parking spots in a nearby lot.
- Reminders, signs, and gentle urging for residents to engage in earth-friendly behaviors, such setting thermostats at reasonable temperatures, promptly reporting problems and leaks, and "no idling" in the building's driveway.
- The Pearl earned LEED Gold certification in 2017, and LEED Platinum for Operations and Maintenance in 2020. The larger Blairs District was the also first multifamily residential campus to receive LEED Gold certification for Operations and Maintenance in 2012.

Economic & Financial

- 12.5% of the units at The Pearl are set aside as affordable, per the Montgomery County Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) Program.
- Living in a transit-friendly, walkable neighborhood reduces the need for residents to own and finance a private vehicle.

Website Reference

- https://www.liveatthepearl.com

The Picket Fence Concept Home

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States

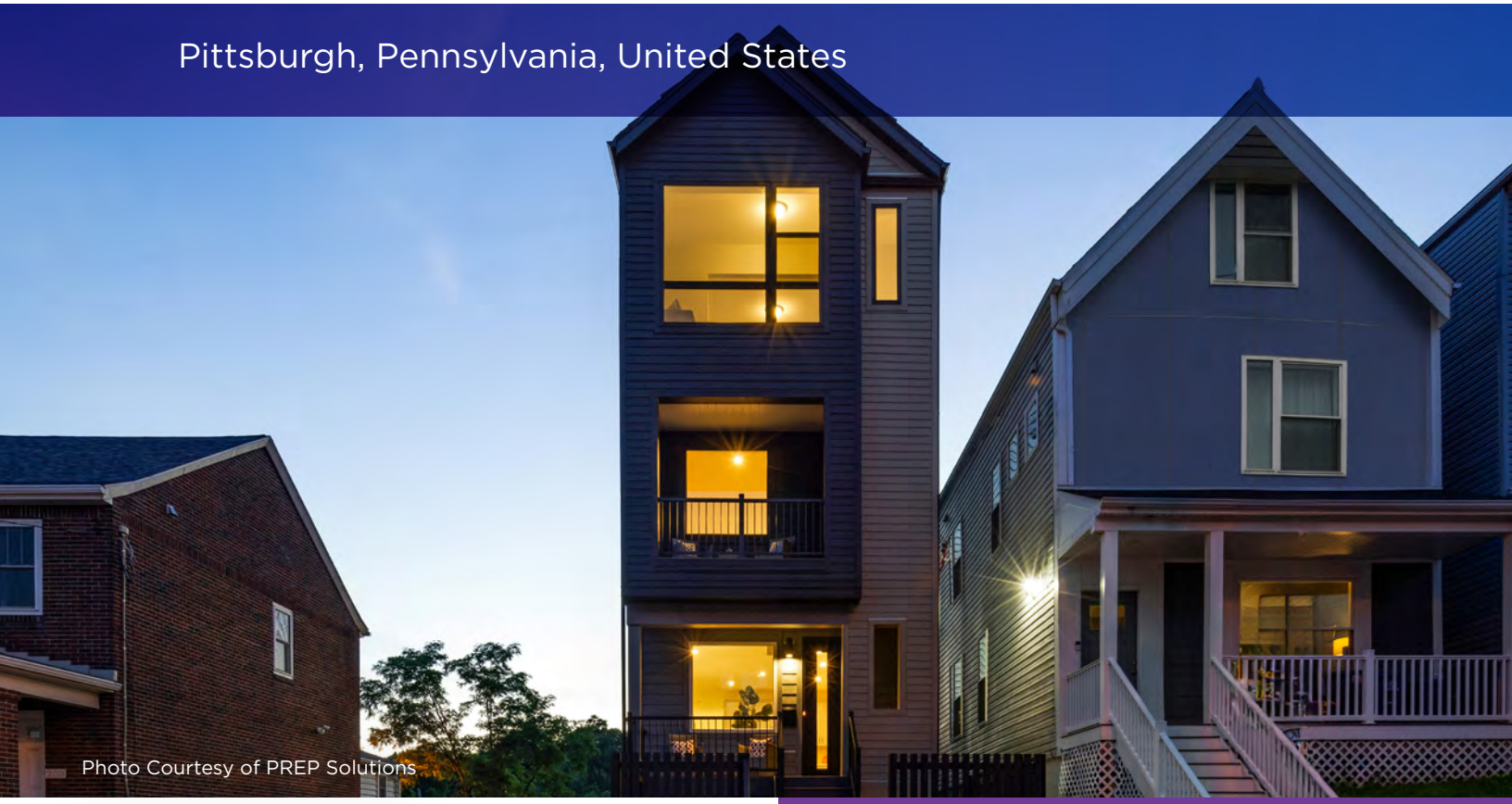


Photo Courtesy of PREP Solutions

The Picket Fence is a "concept home" constructed on a narrow urban infill lot in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, using consumer insights from the America At Home Study. The project was launched to inspire new ways that builders and architects can work together to create healthy and sustainable homes using design innovations and system-built construction solutions, while maintaining a focus on economic attainability. The three-story structure is a two-unit detached townhouse, with a 2,007-square-foot two-story unit sitting above a 660-square-foot studio accessory dwelling unit (ADU). The ground-floor studio residence has a street-facing entry porch; the townhome style residence above has three bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, a "flex space," a covered street-facing balcony, and a rear private entry and parking pad. The Picket Fence is located within the diverse,

- A 3-story detached townhome, created as a "concept home" to pioneer the supply of attainable urban infill homes that enhance well-being and environmental sustainability
- 0.05-acre site
- Two residences: a 2,007 sq.ft. 2-story 3-bedroom unit, above a 660 sq.ft. studio apartment
- Rental rates: $3,500/month for upstairs residence, $1,600/month for downstairs residence
- Completed in 2024
- Developers: Housing Innovation Alliance, DAHLIN Architecture (designer), and Structural Modular Innovations (manufacturing partner)
- Certifications: None

Photo Courtesy of PREP Solutions

walkable, transitional Garfield neighborhood in the historic, artsy East End of Pittsburgh, and it was specifically designed to appeal to millennials who are seeking an active and sustainable urban lifestyle. The project was completed in 2024, and both residences are now occupied by tenants. As a "concept home" or "idea home," The Picket Fence aims to create a framework for builders to take measured risk in delivering housing solutions that exceed consumer expectations, align with household financial realities, and are easier to construct in urban settings.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Identifying top wellness needs through rigorous consumer research.

The Picket Fence was inspired by the America at Home Study, which was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic to survey Americans on their behaviors, motivations and priorities related to their homes.[1] Over four survey periods (April 2020, October 2020, October 2022, and May 2025), the study has collected nearly 16,000 responses from a representative sample of U.S. adults with household incomes above $50,000. The study aims to provide insights for future home and community design in the United States, and it has identified the most desirable wellness and sustainability features from a consumer standpoint, including: conserving energy and water, eliminating harmful chemicals, energy efficient windows, whole home air and water filtration, and minimizing overall environmental impact. The study also highlighted the growing importance of efficient and flexible living spaces, as well as an increased acceptance of smaller homes and yards, and it identified wellness as a major purchase motivator for U.S. homebuyers and renters.

[1] https://www.americaathomestudy.com

The consumer insights gathered through the America at Home Study specifically guided the design of The Picket Fence. The founders of the study (tst ink, Strategic Solutions Alliance, and DAHLIN Group Architecture and Planning) partnered with the Pittsburgh-based Housing Innovation Alliance (a national crowd-accelerated innovation platform for building industry stakeholders) and Structural Modular Innovations (a Pittsburgh area modular home manufacturer) to deliver the project. The Picket Fence is the second concept home to spin out of the America at Home Study. The first was built in the Research Triangle region of North Carolina in 2021, in partnership with Garman Homes[2], and two future concept homes are in the planning stages.

Addressing housing scarcity and affordability through urban infill.

One important finding from the America at Home Study is a high level of consumer dissatisfaction with financial well-being, which is aligned with the continued housing scarcity and escalating prices in metro areas across the United States. Housing affordability is at an all-time low – with the median U.S. housing price peaking at $442,000 in June 2024 – and the U.S. housing market was undersupplied by 2.1 million units (0.7 million for sale and 1.4 million for rent) in 2024.[3] The design of The Picket Fence provides an approach for addressing housing supply and diversity by fitting two residences into one structure on a narrow urban lot, while still providing occupants of both residences with equal opportunities to enjoy private outdoor spaces more typical of traditional single-family homes (metaphorically "a picket fence"). This dual-dwelling or "townhome+1" approach addresses both affordability and scarcity by utilizing a previously vacant urban lot, opening a pathway for people to move into an existing urban neighborhood, and offering the flexibility for residents to pursue a multigenerational living arrangement or to move between the two residences based on their life stage and needs. While the two Picket Fence residences are currently rented by two separate households, this kind of design in a for-sale application would support affordability for the homeowner though a rental income stream generated by the ground-floor ADU. The modular construction process and the use of advanced, energy-efficient systems (see further discussion below) also support the home's affordability both in its initial construction and in ongoing living expenses for residents.

> The dual-dwelling design offers the flexibility for multigenerational living or generating income by renting out of one of units.

One challenge with new construction homes in established neighborhoods is maintaining the character of the community, while answering to current consumer lifestyle demands. First developed in the late 1800s, Garfield is one of 90 unique neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh. Today, it is adjacent to the local tech corridor, world-class universities, and nationally recognized hospital systems. "The Picket Fence is unique, and the design is thoughtfully done to ensure that it integrates with the historic neighborhood, including the street-facing front porches and emphasis on the front yard to enable community connectivity, and putting alley-accessed off-street parking in the rear," shared Dennis Steigerwalt, President of the Housing Innovation Alliance. The concept home has strategically placed windows, which offer a connection to the surroundings and a calming experience for residents, with incredible views of the city spanning from Mount Washington to Oakland and into East Liberty.

[2] https://www.americaathomestudy.com/the-barnaby and https://concepthome.garmanhomes.com/
[3] https://jbrec.com/insights/us-housing-shortage-building-more-low-cost-homes/

Photo Courtesy of PREP Solutions

Delivering wellness through intentional and flexible design.

The second and third waves of the America at Home Study looked at the home and community preferences of twelve different demographic and psychographic groups in the United States, using Kantar's MindBase™ methodology. Based on the findings, The Picket Fence Home project intentionally targets the "Trail Blazers" demographic[4] – a subsegment of millennial consumers who prioritize social connectivity, personal well-being, efficiency, and flexibility. Key wellness design features in the home include maximizing natural light, connections to the outdoors, ample built-in storage for efficiency and functionality, and adaptable flex spaces to accommodate different lifestyle needs and interests. "We operated on a philosophy of 'spaces, not rooms' when designing The Picket Fence, allowing us to maximize functionality over traditional bed and bath counts," said Nancy Keenan, president at DAHLIN Architecture. In the upstairs residence, the family room is heart of the home, situated toward the front to create a connection and extension to the covered, street-facing outdoor balcony. The kitchen is the hub for cooking and socializing, with plenty of space for cooking and built-in storage, and a large Island with a flexible table extension that can function as a full-size dining table for entertaining.

From the consumer research, the design team knew that target buyers see the primary bedroom as a place for more than just sleeping, but also to watch TV and movies, play games, listen to music, read, and even work. Therefore, the primary bedroom includes an adjacent flex space, providing an adaptable private area for unwinding, exercising, and/or working under ample natural light from oversized windows with an expansive city view. There is another sizable flex space in the second-floor hallway/stair landing for multiple possible uses, such as exercise, work, relaxing, or a children's play area.

"Trail Blazers" associate their idea of home with safety; therefore, the design team integrated elements that will enhance the residents' sense of security and community interaction. For example, separate front and rear entries for each of the two residences, along with the elevation of the porches, create a sense of arrival and safety for residents and guests, while street-facing porches on both residences encourage neighborly connection and visually create harmony with the older, existing homes in the neighborhood.

> "We operated on a philosophy of 'spaces, not rooms' when designing The Picket Fence."
>
> – Nancy Keenan, president at DAHLIN Architecture

[4] See Kantar Monitor MindBase™ consumer segmentation, https://monitor.kantar.com/mindbase/.

Photo Courtesy of PREP Solutions

Piloting new design and construction approaches to increase the supply of affordable, healthy, and sustainable homes.

From the outset, the partners that created The Picket Fence sought to align consumer-driven design principles with a cost-effective and sustainable systems-built housing approach – volumetric modular construction (VMC) – to pilot a home that meets modern functionality needs and elevates wellness standards. The speed, efficiency, quality control, and cost effectiveness of VMC make it a valuable tool in addressing housing shortages by facilitating the faster delivery of sustainable and affordable homes. The Picket Fence is a fully factory-built structure; three stacked volumetric modular units were built and outfitted in a factory and then transported and assembled on the building site in one day (thereby minimizing the construction disturbances to the neighborhood). The builder delivered the modules in about four weeks to roughly 80% completion, from siding and roofing to cabinets, countertops, and plumbing fixtures and finishes all installed and ready to be connected on-site. VMC also offers other advantages, such as: better quality control and consistency in a factory environment; precision manufacturing to optimize materials and reduce construction waste; improved reuse and recycling of construction materials; flexibility in design and customization within context of the factory-built construction process; and better worker safety by shifting most of the construction work to an indoor, controlled environment. Most of the sustainability and wellness features are already built or installed at the factory, including features such as an innovative small-diameter duct Rheia HVAC system, locally made triple-pane windows, air source heat pumps, continuous insulation, and active ventilation and air purification systems. The Picket Fence uses durable, low-maintenance materials and a whole-home integrated systems approach, which not only reduces the carbon footprint of the home and improves air quality, but also lowers the residents' monthly utility bills.

The U.S. housing industry has often lagged in embracing innovation, but The Picket Fence confronts this head-on, showing how creativity and collaboration can improve the supply of healthy and sustainable housing in the future. By uniting design, construction, and manufacturing professionals, The Picket Fence captures the benefits of systems-built construction and presents a model to responsibly address the housing crisis. "The Picket Fence has set the wheels of innovation in motion, ready to roll out far beyond Pittsburgh," said Teri Slavik-Tsuyuki, a founding partner of the America at Home Study. "We developed a scalable model that can be recreated in markets all over the country. Envisioning a future where sustainable and attainable housing is truly achievable doesn't feel so far-fetched anymore."


Photo Courtesy of PREP Solutions

Measurable Impacts

Almost a year after its completion, analysis showed that The Picket Fence has met its goal of reducing construction waste and lowering carbon footprint during the construction process, as well as delivering healthier indoor air and energy efficiency. It has performed very well on the three wellness and sustainability goals set for the project, with measurements verified by various collaborators:

- **High-performance home:** The Picket Fence aimed to create a healthier indoor environment and ensure energy resilience in the face of a major event. The installation of ActivePure technology in the upstairs townhome residence resulted in reductions in particulate matter and residual VOCs by over 74%, as compared to only 45% in the downstairs ADU (which served as a control environment). This strong performance in enhancing indoor air quality was supported by continuous air monitoring and a data analysis system.
- **Less waste generation:** The volumetric modular construction process emphasized reducing, reusing, and recycling building materials. Monitoring and data provided by the manufacturing partner revealed that The Picket Fence generated less than 0.5 pounds of waste per square foot in the construction process. When compared to the 4.4 pounds of waste per square foot typical for site-built homes in the United States, this represents an 87% reduction in construction waste.
- **Carbon emissions reduction:** As compared to traditional new home construction, The Picket Fence Home was able to achieve a 65% reduction in carbon emissions, as verified by an expert from the Construction Management Department at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, CA. This reduction was primarily achieved through strategic material specifications, efficient material use, prefabrication methods, improved energy efficiency, and shorter construction timelines. Although this falls short of the initial target of a 70% reduction, the primary lessons learned include the necessity of collaborating with product manufacturers committed to strong carbon reduction goals and the identification of embodied carbon hotspots, such as insulation, concrete, gypsum board, and windows.

Looking ahead, both residences are currently under evaluation as a "living lab" through a research partnership with the University of Pittsburgh's Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation. The initiative tracks the concept home's quantitative performance metrics and engages with Picket Fence residents to measure outcomes of design objectives, expectations around space utilization, and achieved lifestyle benefits, in order to inform the research team's open-sourced blueprint for sharing lessons learned through the concept home.

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Hospital grade air filtration, using ActivePure Technology, coupled with a continuous air monitoring and data analysis system, resulting in reductions in particulate matter and residual VOCs by over 74% in the upstairs unit.
- Advanced small-diameter duct Rheia air distribution/HVAC system to minimize temperature variances from room to room.
- Air ducts installed in the ceiling (instead of on the floor or near baseboards) to reduce dust accumulation.
- Multiple flex spaces provide areas for in-home exercise.
- Located in a walkable urban neighborhood that encourages active transit and natural movement.

Mental & Spiritual

- Triple-paned windows block street noise for better concentration and rest.
- Oversized windows and strategic placement of windows to maximize exposure to natural daylight and provide expansive city views.
- Flexible spaces that can accommodate multiple lifestyle needs: working from home, exercise, children's play, and/or the need for privacy and unwinding.
- Built-in design features that improve convenience and ease daily household tasks (e.g., built-in entry way storage, built-in kitchen table, extensive storage spaces, etc.).

Social

- The front porch and balcony for each of the two residences are intentionally positioned for connection to the street and the neighborhood.
- Large, open kitchen and living areas for entertaining and social gatherings.
- The two-residence design of the house provides an opportunity for multigenerational living.

Civic & Community

- The two-residence design and building on a vacant urban lot increases the housing supply and housing diversity in an established, historic neighborhood.
- The house is designed to be compatible with the style of the existing homes on the street and in the neighborhood.
- Engagement with the community and neighbors during the development and construction process to communicate the value and intent of The Picket Fence.
- Leveraging factory-built construction methods significantly reduced the community impact through less time on site, fewer contractor visits, and less overall noise.

Environmental

- The volumetric modular construction process emphasized reducing, reusing, and recycling building materials, resulting in an 87% waste reduction as compared to conventional home building methods.
- Achieved a 65% reduction in carbon emissions in the construction process, through strategic material specifications, efficient material use, prefabrication methods, improved energy efficiency, and shorter construction timelines.
- The home uses advanced systems and technologies developed in collaboration with the United States Department of Energy (DOE). It exceeds the Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH) standard, as verified by a third party.
- Triple-paned windows for energy efficiency, as well as noise reduction.
- High performance air source heat pump.
- Designed to be ready for solar power.

Economic & Financial

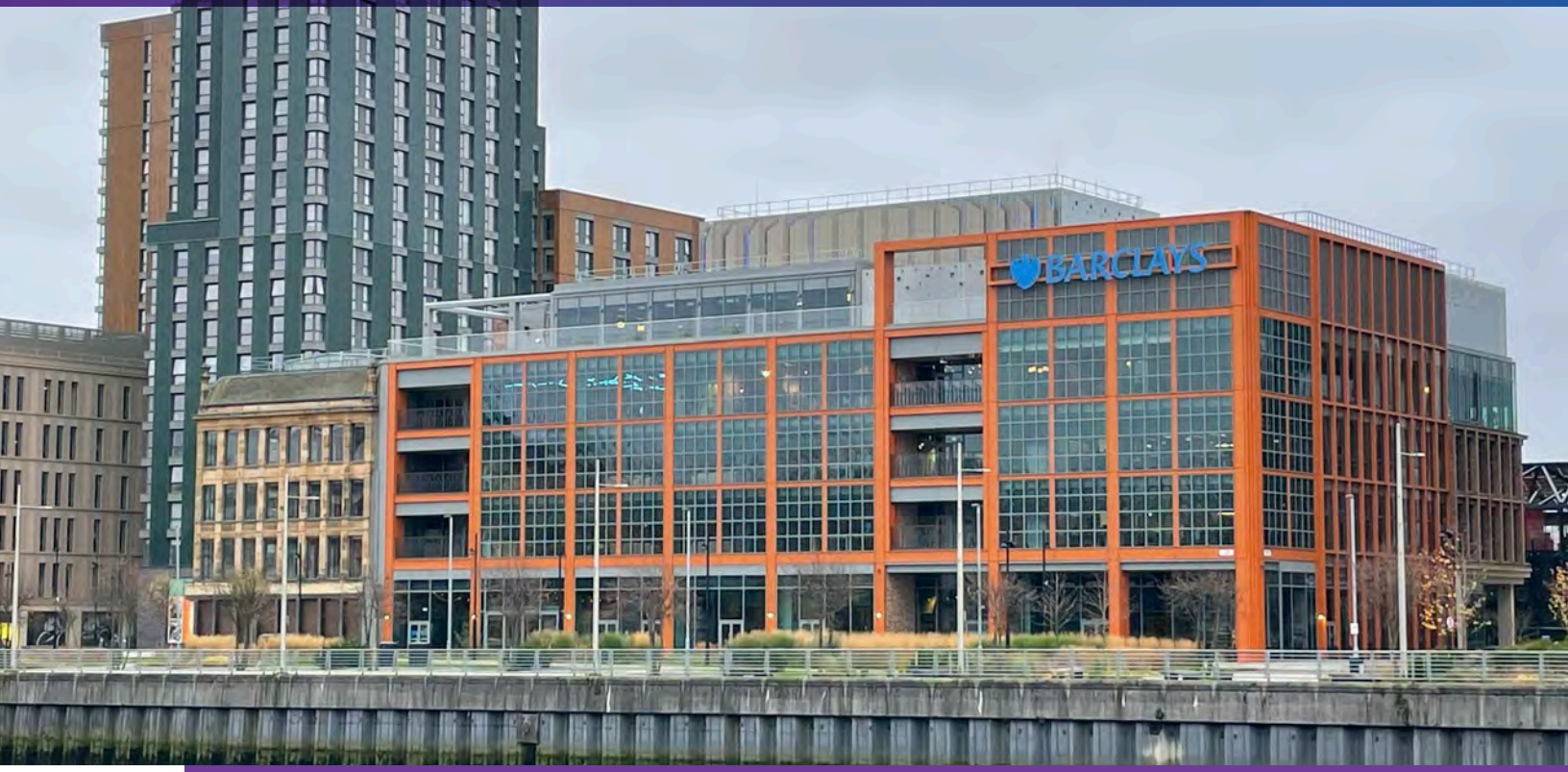
- As a "concept home," it demonstrates the viability (efficiency and value) of factory-built healthy and sustainable housing, and it establishes a new model of delivering affordable homes for households of various sizes within the typical lot size of a U.S. city.
- The stacked duplex design provides two separate housing units, giving homebuyers flexibility in different life stages, while also providing a potential source of rental income.
- Low-maintenance materials and advanced energy-efficient systems reduce ongoing operational costs for utilities and upkeep.

Website References

- https://www.americaathomestudy.com/the-picket-fence
- https://www.probuilder.com/idea-homes/the-picket-fence

Barclays Bank Campus, Buchanan Wharf

Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom



- Open corporate campus for Barclays Bank, within the larger Buchanan Wharf mixed-use project, developed on an urban brownfield site
- Serves as the northern European headquarters for Barclays Bank
- 6.7-acre site (including a 3-acre park)
- 470,000 sq.ft. of Grade A office space for Barclays, across 3 buildings (plus 2 additional non-Barclays buildings)
- 6,500+ workers at Barclays, expected to grow to 8,500 (plus 1,100+ additional non-Barclays workers, and several hundred residents)
- Barclays Campus opened in 2021 (entire Wharf project was completed in 2023)
- Developers: Barclays Bank and Drum Property Group
- Certifications (for Barclays Bank Campus): WELL Platinum and WELL Equity certifications; BREEAM Excellent rating; EPC "A" rating

Buchanan Wharf is a large-scale, mixed-use urban redevelopment project in the center of Glasgow, Scotland, with the new Barclays Bank Campus as its centerpiece. This brownfield site comprises 6.7 acres (3 city blocks) in the Tradeston district of Glasgow – historically a hub of shipbuilding and docklands – on the south bank of the River Clyde, across from the city's financial district. Buchanan Wharf is one of Scotland's largest ever development projects ($630m/£500m investment) and is seen as transformational for the regeneration of Glasgow's city center, creating a living and working community on what was previously a neglected industrial site. The entire Buchanan Wharf development encompasses the new 3-building Barclays Bank Campus (which is the main focus of this case study), a new six-story headquarters for the Student Loans Company (1,100 workers), a new 324-apartment residential complex, refurbishment of two Category B-listed buildings, and 3 acres of new public park space along the riverfront with a mix of public amenities and retail. The aim of the Barclays Bank Campus is to create a best-in-class corporate headquarters in sustainability, inclusiveness, and employee well-being, while simultaneously bringing significant economic development impacts to the surrounding communities.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

An open corporate campus that shares wellness with the community.

The Barclays Glasgow Campus was designed at the outset as an open corporate campus that delivers community well-being infrastructure and supports a vibrant live-work-play neighborhood. The campus is centered on three purpose-built Barclays office buildings, whose design, placement, and operations create an inviting public realm for community events, commerce, and leisure. The names of the three Barclays buildings – Tradescroft, Windmillcroft, and Wellcroft – pay homage to the industrial heritage of the neighborhood. Surrounding the office buildings are public plazas and a new three-acre riverfront public park, with attractive landscaping and plantings, shade trees, seating areas, public art, wayfinding signage, and walking/biking trails that connect across the river to the rest of the city of Glasgow. The design of the public spaces focuses on people's movement, accessibility, and connectivity, and a four-lane highway was removed to create this new park and revitalize the riverfront. Three restaurants/cafes in the Barclays buildings are open to the public, offering healthy menu choices. The ground floor of Wellcroft building has retail and gathering spaces for community events, including a farmers/seasonal market on

the weekends. Community activities for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods are also held in these buildings, such as monthly resident association meetings, book swaps, language classes, and art exhibits. The Barclays Campus and Buchanan Wharf redevelopment have transformed a brownfield site of derelict structures into a new city center district, inviting those who work, visit, and live there to engage with the waterfront and its public spaces. The overall Buchanan Wharf project was recognized as Regeneration Project of the Year at the Scottish Property Awards in 2022.

Creating an economic engine for the local community and the region.

The purpose of this project, in addition to meeting Barclays' corporate objectives, is to be an engine for Glasgow's economic regeneration. In a partnership with the Glasgow City Council and Scottish Enterprise, Barclays Bank's investment was supported by a commitment of $15.7 million (£12.5m) in government incentives over a three-year period, pending certain economic and social development milestones. By all measures, most of the community impact metrics (e.g., numbers of workers trained, new jobs created) have been met and exceeded. As of fall 2024, 6,500 jobs have been brought to the site – exceeding the 4,000 fulltime workers originally envisioned and planned, due to the adoption of flexible and remote work after the COVID-19 pandemic – and the number of workers is expected to grow to 8,500 over the next couple of years. Barclays chose Glasgow because of its high-quality universities and the city's cost competitiveness, but the project has also created new training, employment, and career development opportunities for a local workforce that had previously "faced barriers into work, including people with disabilities and school leavers," according to First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon.[1]

In addition to being one of Glasgow's largest private employers, the Barclays Campus is home to the new Barclays Eagle Lab, which will incubate start-up companies focusing on emerging technologies and innovation. To support local small businesses, Barclays does not charge rent or utility costs for its retail tenants in the street level public spaces. In return, these businesses are asked to bank with Barclays, and to price their products and services at an affordable scale for the local customer base.

[1] https://home.barclays/news/press-releases/2021/10/barclays-unveils-state-of-the-art-campus-in-glasgow/

The project has created new training, employment, and career development opportunities for a local workforce.

Elevating workplace wellness to new heights.

The WELL Platinum certification of the campus reflects Barclays' commitment to WELL at Scale, a program of the International Well Building Institute (IWBI) that supports an organization to standardize policies, and to measure and improve organizational health performance and impacts, across all locations. The Barclays Glasgow Campus is designed, built, and operated to support Barclays Bank's company-wide objective of being an exemplar workplace and becoming a net-zero company by 2050. At the Glasgow Campus, the offices are designed to optimize wellness across multiple dimensions, while providing highly flexible and functional workspaces. All of the work areas are full of natural light and are filled with hundreds of specially curated live plants that promote mental wellness and cleaner air. All office areas are designed for flexible configurations, furniture arrangements, and work solutions to accommodate group work, quiet work, meetings and videoconferences, individual preferences, and neurodiversity. Employees have access to a large on-site gym and group fitness classes, as well as private rooms for massage, health/wellness consultations, counseling, and physical therapy. Multiple on-site cafeterias and restaurants offer heathy and fresh food choices for both employees and visitors. The workspaces have continuous monitoring for air quality, water quality, and thermal comfort. In recognition of its exemplary workplace wellness and sustainability, the Barclays Glasgow Campus was chosen as the winner of the Corporate Workplace and Best of the Best categories at the British Council of Offices (BCO) National Awards in 2023.

Design considerations extend to the cave-like amphitheater that uses unique wooden seating to make occupants feel grounded, connected, and safe.

Designing for neurodiversity and inclusion.

The Barclays Campus places a high priority on inclusiveness, with a particular focus on the neurodiversity its employees. The design team worked closely with accessibility consultants and the nonprofit Scottish Autism, implementing their findings around the building to accommodate people with a wide range of needs and sensory profiles. To ensure the comfort level of autistic and neurodiverse staff, the buildings incorporated considerations in lighting; the sound environment; colors; textures (e.g., fabric of upholstery); furniture styles (e.g., shapes, legs, and arms of chairs); and accessibility via the doors, signage, and fire escapes. The design team used a variety of textures, colors, and artwork throughout the campus to create diverse environments for people with different sensory profiles – for example, some spaces use very bright and patterned designs, while others use muted and calm palettes, so that workers can choose what environment works best for them. Quiet "MySpace" rooms are available to those who need to retreat from background noise, specific desks are designed for those sensitive to lighting, special meeting and focus rooms can be reserved by neurodiverse staff, and bookable extreme quiet zones are available to those with heightened audio sensitivity. Rocking chairs and swinging hammocks in outdoor breakout areas serve as places for mental respite for all staff, while also helping to soothe stimming behaviors for those that need them. Design considerations extend to group meeting spaces, such as the cave-like amphitheater that uses unique wooden seating to feel grounded, connected, and safe. Even toilet facilities maximize inclusiveness – for example, all toilet stalls are private/self-contained, many are gender neutral, and many have no hand dryers (paper towels only) for users who are sensitive to noise. The facilities are also equipped with Braille panels, and there are contactless interfaces and wide/threshholdless doorways throughout to aid those with impaired mobility. All of these design features are incorporated seamlessly into the buildings, not setting aside specially labeled facilities for those who are neurodivergent, but rather offering a wide range of options everywhere so that all workers can feel equal and empowered to select the work environments that meet their unique needs and preferences.

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Meets and exceeds WELL standards for indoor air quality and water quality.
- Flexible and ergonomic workstation designs.
- Accessible and universal design used throughout to make the facility barrier-free for staff with different needs and abilities (e.g., Braille panels, contactless interfaces, doorway designs, etc.).
- On-site gym and extensive fitness programming for employees.
- Health and mental wellness consultations available regularly on-site for employees.
- Healthy food options at multiple on-site cafeterias and restaurants, with some produce sourced from on-site garden plots.
- The entire Buchanan Wharf development is designed to be walkable, transit-friendly, and cycling-friendly. Biking/walking paths connect to the rest of the city, and on-site bike storage is available.

Mental & Spiritual

- All buildings are intentionally and thoughtfully designed for neurodiversity and different sensory profiles, in partnership with Scottish Autism (*see text above for more details*).
- Biophilic design elements, such as extensive use of hundreds of green plants throughout indoor spaces, maximizing windows and natural daylight, and use of natural materials.
- Workspaces have complex lighting systems, smart acoustics, creative spaces, and technology to support hybrid working.

Social

- Ample "CoSpace" colleague collaboration spaces in offices, with areas for workers to socialize, connect, and play (e.g., Lego challenge area, games, table tennis, escape room).
- Frequent facilitated activities and programs within the offices for employees to connect and get to know their colleagues.
- Active roster of social events and activities for employees (yoga classes, concerts, movie screenings, etc.).
- Multiple indoor and outdoor gathering spaces are incorporated into the office campus, including many on-site amenities (restaurants, fitness, etc.).

Civic & Community

- Honoring the regional heritage by incorporating Scottish landscapes into the lobby designs, procuring fabric from local makers for furniture, and using handpicked stones from local quarries for front desks in the buildings.
- Several on-site restaurants and cafes, retail outlets, farmers market, etc. are open to the entire community.
- Barclays office buildings include ground-floor community meeting and exhibition spaces that are available for use by the wider public – including a large events space created by the refurbishment of Kingston House (a historic listed building on the site).
- A new public riverside park is part of the overall Buchanan Wharf development (with green spaces, trees, seating, cycling paths, etc.), as well as a large outdoor amphitheater, providing new public spaces that serve the entire city.
- The entire development is a vital component in the regeneration of Glasgow city center, creating a new live-work-play neighborhood on a derelict brownfield site.

Environmental

- Campus-wide sustainability goal to become carbon zero and zero waste by 2025.
- Heat pump instead of a gas-fired power station, with a new Net Zero Carbon Energy Center on campus providing 100% renewable heating and cooling from ground and air sources, and additional energy generation from rooftop solar panels.
- Hundreds of plants on each floor of the office buildings, curated for their toxin absorption and mental calming properties.
- Garden plots on the roof of the energy center enable a garden club, produce edible herbs and plants for on-site food outlets, and generate organic compost for use in on-site landscaping and distribution to the community.
- Three beehives with 60,000+ honeybees on the roof, which support biodiversity, produce honey, and are used for employees to visit and learn about the hives.
- Since opening, the ongoing involvement of an on-site Green Team has facilitated many employee and community sustainability initiatives (e.g. litter picks, clothing swaps, recycling, reusable and compostable containers for food and drinks, improved waste segregation and recycling practices).

Economic & Financial

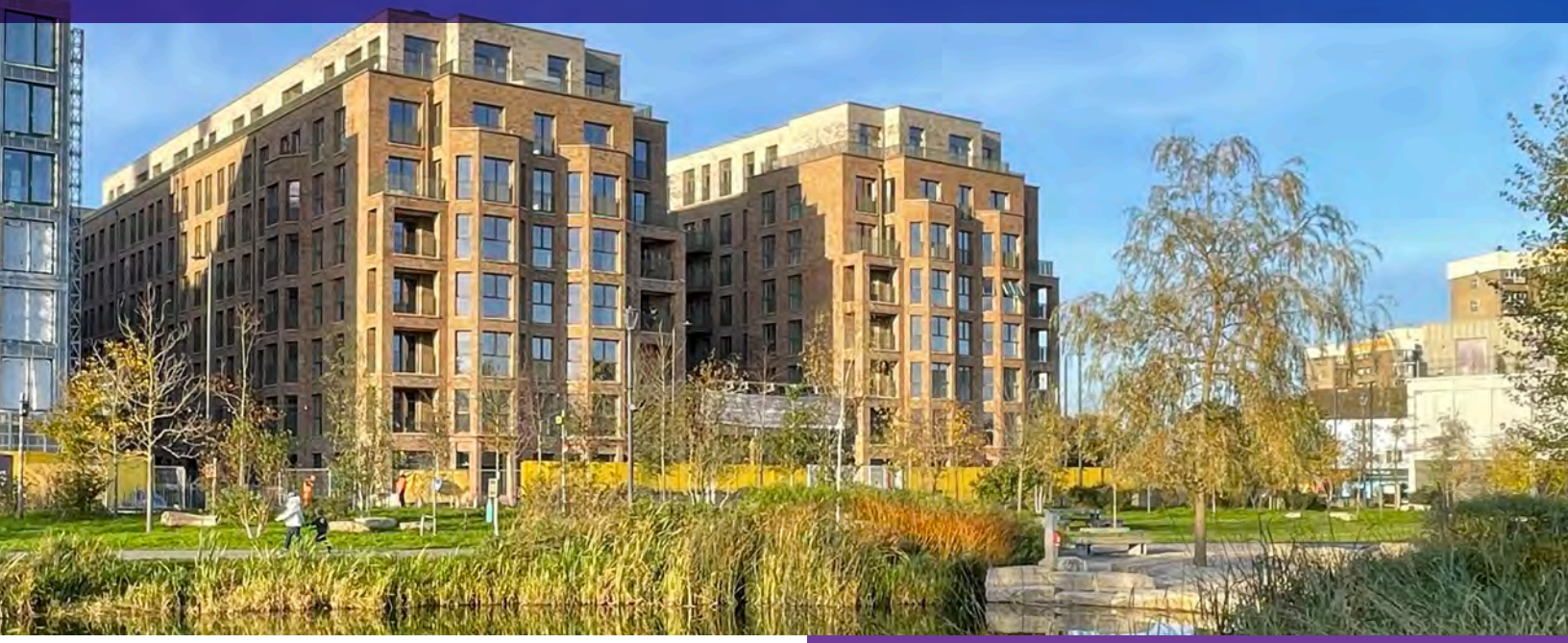
- As of fall 2024, the project has brought 6,500 jobs to the city center; expected to add another 1,000 in 2025 and grow to 8,500 in 2026 – bringing significant economic impacts to Glasgow and the local neighborhoods.
- New employment and skills training opportunities for youth and residents in a formerly economically deprived area.
- Eagle Lab incubator to support entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Curated street-level retail spaces (facing the public park and river) for social enterprises and small businesses to serve the local community (cafés, barbershop, street food, etc.), available rent-free to tenants.
- During construction, the project prioritized sourcing expertise and materials from local businesses, with over 70 Scottish firms working on-site (two-thirds of these from Glasgow).

Website References

- https://home.barclays/news/press-releases/2021/10/barclays-unveils-state-of-the-art-campus-in-glasgow/
- https://www.scottishdesignawards.com/2022/master-planning/buchanan-wharf-barclays-campus-glasgow/index.html

Brent Cross Town

Barnet Borough, Greater London, United Kingdom



Brent Cross Town is a new "park town" currently under development in the North London suburb of Brent Cross, about 7 miles from the center of London. One of Europe's largest urban regeneration projects, it is also one of the world's largest real estate projects using wellness (combined with sustainability) as a core design driver and value proposition. It is being developed as a partnership between the local Barnet Borough council government and Related Argent (which also led the redevelopment of King's Cross in London and Hudson Yards in New York City). This massive mixed-use project, estimated to cost about $10 billion (£8b), is being built on a former underused industrial site of about 180 acres. Planning for the project started before 2010 and has involved extensive public consultations with local residents; construction began in 2020 and is expected to take up to 15-20 years. As of spring 2025, more than half a dozen buildings are at various stages of construction, including two affordable housing

- Suburban, high-density master-planned and mixed-use "park town," developed on a brownfield site
- 180-acre site (including 50 acres of parks and recreational spaces)
- 6,700 residences planned (studio and 1-4 bedroom apartments/condos, affordable housing, senior living, co-living, student housing), plus 3 million sq.ft. of commercial space and 460,000 sq.ft. of retail/leisure space
- Home prices: $2,400+/month for rentals; $500s+ for purchases
- Opened in 2025 (still building, expected completion in 15-20 years)
- Developers: Related Argent, in partnership with Barnet Council (local government)
- Certifications: UKGBC Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework (planning to be net-zero carbon by 2030); WiredScore and SmartScore Neighborhood certifications; WELL, BREEAM, and/or NABERS UK to be used in some buildings

apartment buildings. The first apartments will be available in 2025, and the first commercial building will be completed in 2026. Upon completion, the development will have 6,700 residences (about 20% as affordable housing); 50 acres of parks, green spaces, and outdoor recreation areas; 3 million square feet of office space serving up to 25,000 workers; and 460,000 square feet of retail/leisure space.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

A high-density "park town" driven by wellness and sustainability.

Brent Cross Town embraces a modern vision of the historic "garden city" concept, building a deliberately high-density, mixed-use, walkable development that combines the convenience and vibrancy of urban living with suburban open space and greenery. Most of the planned 6,700 new homes are in high-rise apartments. Also in the works are a new main street and town center with more than 50 new shops, cafés, and restaurants; commercial properties and offices; a university campus (Sheffield Hallam University); new and expanded/improved schools; and new sports and leisure offerings. These high-density, high-rise structures will be interspersed with 7 parks and 8 public plazas/squares and surrounded by vast green fields for leisure and outdoor recreation.

Courtyards, plazas, and retail outlets are strategically situated between buildings serving different populations, to encourage social interactions.

Brent Cross Town aims to create a vibrant community where people can enjoy a healthy, sustainable lifestyle. Both wellness and sustainability have shaped the vision and planning of the project, encompassing four pillars, as described below. Wellness is a core part of the value proposition used to market the project to potential residents and the community, and these features are prominently on display in the project's visitor center and sales office.

- **Flourishing Community:** The diverse housing products include market-price for-sale condominiums and rental apartments, affordable housing, student housing, co-living, and senior living – facilitating the creation of a mixed, multigenerational community that will attract people at all life stages (singles and families, young people and seniors). In the first phase, 20% of the units are affordable/social housing, enabling a mix of income levels to live there. Courtyards, plazas, and retail outlets are strategically situated between buildings serving different populations, to encourage social interactions. Supporting the goals of inclusivity and well-being for all, the Brent Cross Town Community fund was created to support regional groups that focus on community-building projects like education, employment, and skills training, with local residents involved in the annual selection process.
- **Strengthening Connections:** Brent Cross Town is a walkable and transit-friendly community, with fast and convenient access to central London (in as little as 12 minutes) via two rail stations, one of which – Brent Cross West – was opened in December 2023 as a new gateway to Brent Cross Town. The project is designed with a "15-minute city" concept, putting all services and amenities within a short walk of homes and offices. It will provide pedestrian- and cycle-friendly low-speed streets (following Healthy Streets principles), 6,600 bicycle storage spaces, 1.7 miles of new cycling routes, and improved connections to regional active transit routes.
- **Net Zero Carbon Town:** In addition to strengthening connectivity, investment in public and active transit helps support Brent Cross Town's aim of becoming net zero by 2030. The development will use 100% renewable energy to the extent possible, supplied by a neighborhood-wide district energy network that supplies heating/cooling via buried pipes. Buildings are designed to be energy efficient and reduce embodied carbon (e.g., mass timber construction, recycled/reusable materials), following circular economy principles. The parks and green spaces are designed to deliver biodiversity net gain. Plants are chosen for their ability to adapt to climate change and low water needs, and sustainable water management systems (ponds, green/blue roofs, rain gardens, etc.) are used to reduce rainwater runoff.
- **Sports & Play:** See below for more information about these features.

The Visitor Pavillion serves as a sales office, café/restaurant, and a community space for events and wellness programming, serving everyone in the surrounding areas.

Sharing wellness infrastructure and integration with surrounding communities.

One of the four pillars of Brent Cross Town's vision is "Sports & Play," embodied by 50 acres of parks, sports fields, and recreational spaces that encourage a healthy and active lifestyle (aligning with Sport England principles of active design). Before any of the buildings broke ground, Brent Cross Town invested in two new parks (Claremont Park and Exploratory Park), which are beautifully landscaped with walking paths, state-of-the-art playgrounds, outdoor games and fitness equipment, sensory gardens and trees, water features, public art, green relaxation areas, and an ice cream parlor. These parks are open to all residents in the surrounding communities, and they also provide natural views for the apartments that are under construction.

Also embedded in the development are the 44-acre Clitterhouse Playing Fields, an existing and underused green space with limited facilities. Over three phases, this area will be transformed (landscaping, plantings, new equipment, drainage, etc.), into a large open public space for many outdoor activities (ball games, kite flying, playgrounds, picnics), and will also incorporate the existing Clitterhouse Farm (a social enterprise with a community garden, café, and events). New facilities will include both traditional sports (football and hockey pitches, tennis/netball courts, basketball courts), as well as non-traditional and informal sports (an all-wheel park, a parkour and bouldering area, skateboarding, boules, mini golf), to provide offerings that will appeal to all ages. Outdoor sports and play will be supplemented by 150,000 square feet of indoor recreational and sports facilities. All of these spaces will be developed and managed in partnership with local partners and will provide significant infrastructure for the 400,000+ residents of Barnet Council and beyond to be active and be outdoors. Brent Cross Town has partnered with groups such as Women in Sport to ensure that all facilities are inclusive and accessible for everyone.

Instead of a standard sales office, Brent Cross Town operates a Visitor Pavillion, which also functions as a community space to promote the vision for the project and host listening sessions with residents from the surrounding neighborhoods. The visitor center features a café/restaurant, educational displays about wellness and sustainability, and community meeting spaces (all open to the public). Even before the first residents moved into the development, Brent Cross Town has hosted a wide array of free events, talks, and workshops in the Visitor Pavilion, parks, and other community spaces – including wellness programming (yoga, sound baths), sports (skateboarding lessons, women's running club), and arts (painting workshops, community choir). The Visitor Pavillion won a Royal Institute of British Architects award, with the judges specifically praising the building's sustainability and evidence of environmental responsibility, and is one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in the United Kingdom.

If you treasure it, measure it.

A key value proposition of Brent Cross Town is health and well-being for its residents. In order to make this pledge a reality, Brent Cross Town has created a *Flourishing Index* to measure the holistic well-being of its residents.[1] The *Flourishing Index* is the first-ever attempt to systematically measure the concept of flourishing within the context of an urban regeneration project. The Index not only collects measures of individual-level well-being (e.g., physical activity, active transit, being in nature, social connections), but also community-level metrics on trust, safety, and participation. It was developed with several partners, including the Barnet London Borough, the University of Manchester, and Buro Happold (an engineering, design and consulting firm). Sheffield Hallam University will join the partnership in future phases, as it opens its new satellite campus within the Brent Cross Town development.

The Index was first launched in 2021 to collect baseline data and to understand community priorities prior to the opening of the development, and this data collection will continue for ten years or more, with results published every 2-3 years. The baseline data were gathered over 12 months using mixed-method and transdisciplinary approaches: surveys, focus groups, and interviews of existing residents in the region on individual/community well-being and priorities; observations of how people use public spaces and social connections; and sensor-based monitoring of indoor/outdoor air quality and active travel. Many questionnaire items were chosen to be specifically comparable to national survey datasets, so that the project can be benchmarked. The data will be used as a feedback loop to inform the project's design and the community's operation over the long term.

Measurable Impacts

As discussed above, Brent Cross Town has developed an innovative *Flourishing Index*, which will be used to measure and track the impact of the project on residents and local communities over the long term. To the knowledge of the GWI research team, this is the first and largest-scale attempt at measuring the human health and well-being impacts of a wellness real estate project on an ongoing basis, starting from the pre-construction phase. While it is too early to report on project impacts, an initial data collection effort was undertaken in January 2021–January 2022, in order to establish baseline data and inform the project's design and priorities as it is developed.[2] Initial findings identified a variety of wellness strengths and weaknesses in the Brent Cross region.

Metrics of well-being:

- The Brent Cross region was relatively strong as compared to other areas in the United Kingdom and Europe for: measures of individual well-being, a sense of belonging to their immediate neighborhood, feelings of safety/trust/respect and celebration/participation/autonomy, and connections with neighbors.
- The Brent Cross region performed more poorly than other benchmark regions for: measures of general happiness, self-reported loneliness, participation in groups/clubs/organizations, job satisfaction, and neighborhood satisfaction.

Metrics of wellness behaviors/activities and environments:

- As compared to a matched comparison site, fewer people used play areas in general, and fewer women/girls used playing fields as compared to men/boys.
- Outdoor air quality measurements were comparable to those in other monitoring sites across London.

[1] https://brentcrosstown.co.uk/media/Brent-Cross-Town-Flourishing-Index_sml.pdf
[2] https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=74304

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Sports & play is a key pillar in the project's vision, planning, and design.
- 50 acres of outdoor parks and recreational facilities, with playgrounds, walking paths, sporting facilities, outdoor fitness areas, and much more.
- 150,000 sq.ft. of indoor recreational and sports facilities.
- Investments to encourage active transit: new rail station, pedestrian- and bike-friendly healthy street design, 1.7 miles of new cycling routes, 6,600 bike storage spaces, etc.
- 15-minute city design, with a goal of 80% of all journeys within Brent Cross Town being done via active transit.

Mental & Spiritual

- First of its kind, bespoke holistic sound and music strategy for the entire development, with key locations mapped out for reducing noise pollution and also amplifying positive noise to promote well-being – for example, amplifying bird songs and water sounds in public spaces, uplifting soundscapes in stairwells, unique soundspaces and silent spaces for meditation and relaxation, excellent acoustics in restaurants/retail areas, sound-dampening features in bedrooms to promote sleep.
- Access to 50 acres of green spaces and nature with five distinct habitats (woodland, grassland, wetland, "open mosaic," and food growing), as well as public art, for respite and recreation.
- Biophilic design, such as the use of timber, plants, etc. in community spaces (Visitor Pavillion, rail station entrance) to promote calmness and positive feelings.
- Mental wellness (yoga, sound baths, meditation) and arts programming in the Visitor Pavillion, free for all to participate.
- On-site university campus and upgraded/state-of-the-art facilities at three existing schools.

Social

- Diverse housing products (market-rate for-sale and rental apartments, social housing, co-living, student housing, senior living), creating a mixed, multigenerational community that will attract people at all life stages and income levels.
- Ample public plazas, courtyards, gardens, community spaces, etc. for social connections. These are strategically situated between buildings serving different populations, to encourage spontaneous interactions.
- Active calendar of events, activities, programs, and workshops – free for all to participate.

Civic & Community

- Not a gated community: all of the parks, playing fields, recreational infrastructure, and programs/activities are open to everyone in the region (benefitting a population of 400,000+ people in the local council and beyond).
- New infrastructure like the rail station, cycling pathways, etc. improves connectivity for the entire region.
- The Visitor Pavilion is a welcoming public space used to engage and listen to the wider community, including ongoing public consultation sessions for each stage of the project's development.
- The Brent Cross Town Community Fund was created to support regional groups that focus on community-building aims like education, employment, and skills training. Since 2019, the Fund has provided $287,000 to 57 projects, with local residents involved in the selection process.

Environmental

- Net-zero carbon by 2030. Whole development follows circular economy principles.
- Neighborhood-wide district energy network providing low-carbon heating to all buildings; 100% renewable energy for all energy supplies controlled by Brent Cross Town.
- Buildings designed for energy efficiency and reducing embodied carbon (e.g., mass timber construction, recycled/reusable materials). Office buildings to be designed to BREEAM, WELL, NABERS UK, and other standards.
- Trees and plant species selected for their robustness, low water usage, and benefits for wildlife and biodiversity. Over 700 new mature trees will be planted throughout the development.
- Sustainable urban drainage systems to reduce rainwater runoff (ponds, green/blue roofs, rain gardens, etc.).
- Walkable and transit-oriented design helps to reduce car usage and related pollution.
- Market-leading technology to support environmental aims – e.g., smart-building technology for energy efficiency, using sensors in public spaces to monitor air quality.
- All materials produced from demolition have been crushed and reused elsewhere on-site during construction.

Economic & Financial

- At least 20% of the housing units reserved for affordable housing (social housing).
- Transit-friendly community with access to education and job opportunities, freeing residents from the financial burden of car ownership.
- 3 million sq.ft. of commercial space to be developed will provide workplaces for 25,000 people.
- The first WiredScore and SmartScore certified neighborhood in Europe, with an intentional strategy to enable and strengthen digital connectivity.
- Construction process has specifically promoted job opportunities for residents of Barnet and neighboring boroughs.

Website References

- https://brentcrosstown.co.uk/
- https://transformingbx.co.uk/

Daphne Steele Building, University of Huddersfield National Health Innovation Campus

Photo Courtesy of University of Huddersfield

The University of Huddersfield is a public research university with a strong vocational emphasis, serving more than 20,000 students from over 130 countries. It is located in Huddersfield, a mid-sized town in northern England (between Leeds and Manchester). First approved in 2020, Huddersfield's new National Health Innovation Campus (NHIC) is a 7-acre site located near the city center, on a derelict piece of land that previously housed a sports center (demolished in 2016). Developed in partnership with Kirklees Council (local government), the National Health Service (NHS), and other local organizations, the project aims to be transformative for the region, by improving health outcomes and creating a leading center for innovation in healthcare.

- Daphne Steele Building is the first building to be constructed on the University of Huddersfield's new National Health Innovation Campus
- Daphne Steele Building: 107,000 sq.ft., 6 stories
- National Health Innovation Campus: 7-acre site and over 800,000 sq.ft. of space across up to 7 buildings
- Daphne Steele Building opened in fall 2024 (a second building will be completed Dec. 2025; other buildings are in the planning stages)
- Developers: University of Huddersfield, in collaboration with AHR Architects
- Certifications: Daphne Steele Building is WELL Platinum pre-certified and BREEAM Excellent; all buildings on the campus are planned to be built to WELL standard and BREEAM standards

Photo Courtesy of University of Huddersfield

The overall NHIC project is approved for up to seven buildings. The $95 million (£75m) Daphne Steele Building (which is the main focus of this case study) opened in fall 2024, and a second $76 million (£60m) building is currently under construction, planned to open in December 2025; the other buildings are still in the planning stages. To the knowledge of the GWI research team, this is the first university to apply healthy building practices across an entire campus, while simultaneously connecting healthy built environments to innovation in healthcare training, service delivery, and entrepreneurship.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

A "Well Living Lab" and a catalyst for community health and wealth building.

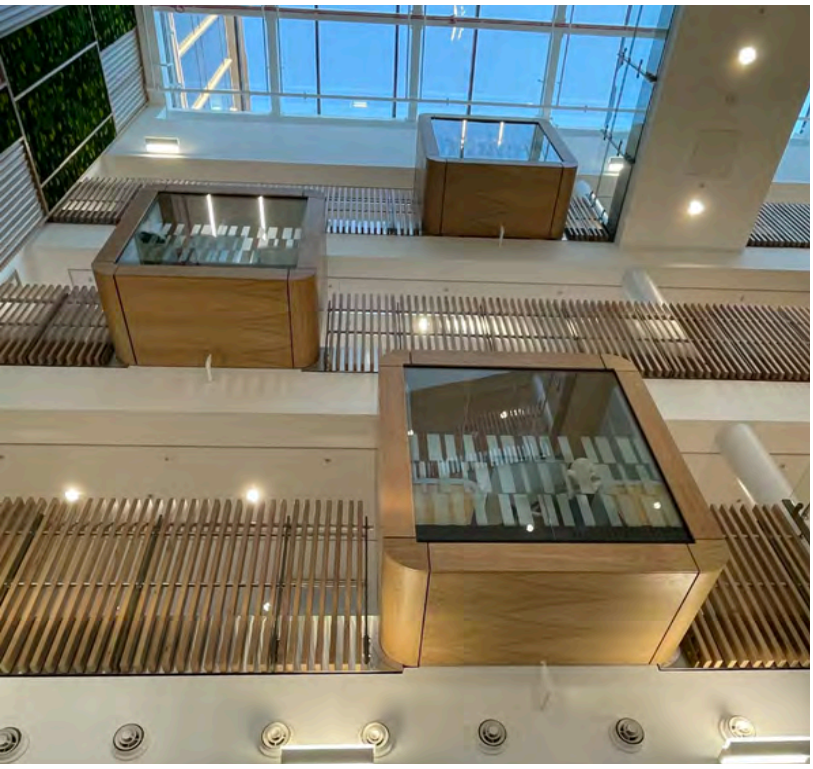
The location of the NHIC and the Daphne Steele Building is significant for well-being because it is located in proximity to some of the most deprived regions in the United Kingdom (West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, and Greater Manchester) by economic, social, health, and other well-being measures, according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation[1] – including lower life expectancies for men and women, high levels of obesity, and high rates of infant mortality. The vision of the NHIC is to create a "Well Living Lab" that will provide educational opportunities to local students in high-demand health occupations; deliver health services to the community; and be an engine of economic growth and innovation through entrepreneurship in health-related fields. The underlying philosophy of the project is that economic, health, and social well-being form a virtuous cycle for individuals and for the region; healthy and happy workers are productive workers. This vision is aligned with the University of Huddersfield's mission of promoting equity, for which it was recognized in the 2024 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings as ranking #2 globally in UN Sustainable Development Goal 10-Reduced Inequalities, among more than 1,100 higher education institutions.[2]

[1] https://data.geods.ac.uk/dataset/index-of-multiple-deprivation-imd
[2] https://www.hud.ac.uk/news/2024/june/the-2024-global-mpact-reduced-inequalities/

Connected to its broader vision of health innovation, there are plans to build the entire NHIC to WELL Platinum standards, making it a future "WELL at Scale" site and potentially the first one in the United Kingdom. The University of Huddersfield has made a commitment to implementing the WELL Building Standard across all of its new construction projects, both at the NHIC and on other campuses – an investment that will also support the university's aim to be net-zero carbon by 2030. As the first building to open on the NHIC, the Daphne Steele Building is the first academic building in the United Kingdom to be designed and built to the WELL Platinum standard. When asked about the reason for seeking certification, Liz Towns-Andrews, regional and business lead for the NHIC, responded: "If the campus is about community health and well-being, the buildings need to reflect that. It's about walking the talk." Following evidence-based healthy building standards is a concrete reflection of the NHIC's commitment to bringing greater health and well-being to its students, staff, and wider community.

Designed to enhance the well-being of diverse occupants and users.

The overall NHIC project will encompass a wide range of buildings and services, serving not only the university but also a regional population of more than 7 million – including specialist clinical teaching facilities, research facilities, public-facing health clinics, and co-located public and private sector partners. The Daphne Steele Building opened in fall 2024, as the first of seven planned buildings on the campus. It is named after the NHS's first black matron, Daphne Steele, who emigrated from Guyana in 1951, to honor her legacy of advocating for health equity in the community. The building is home to the university's Health and Wellbeing Academy and is designed to serve multiple functions related to healthcare – including providing state-of-the-art teaching facilities for allied health professionals, delivering patient care (podiatry clinic, gait and performance clinic), and conducting health research.



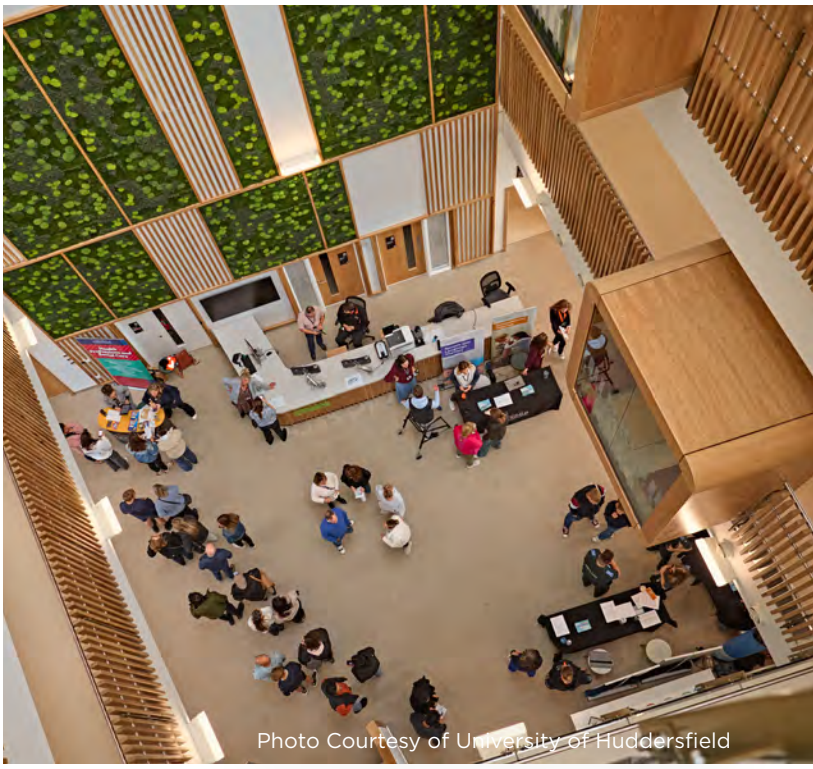


Photo Courtesy of University of Huddersfield

The Daphne Steele Building is intentionally designed to imbue holistic well-being into a multipurpose and multiuser environment where diverse activities like learning, practical labs, testing, and patient care take place, and where occupants also need to study, work, wait for appointments, conduct research, socialize, and relax. Biophilic elements are integrated throughout the building, including a light-filled atrium with a multistory plant wall, timber finishes, large windows with views of Huddersfield's green hills, and rooftop outdoor patios shielded from wind by glass walls. To give users a coherent wayfinding strategy in the building, the design utilizes color schemes and cohesive internal finishes for each area – e.g., physio and sports areas use navy blue, podiatry and orthotics use fresh greens, social and breakout spaces use lively and stimulating colors, and each stair core is also assigned a color. This unified color scheme helps to make navigation easy and accessible, and it enables occupants to maintain a sense of place in a large building. The building's finishes were specifically selected for their healthy attributes, such as carpets that use a weaving technology to actively trap fine particles from the air.

A united color scheme helps to make navigation easy and accessible, enabling occupants to maintain a sense of place in a large building.

The entire NHIC is intended to be a welcoming space for the community, alongside students and staff. About 50% of the space in the Daphne Steele Building is public-facing – including its podiatry and specialty care clinics, ground-floor café/restaurant, and community spaces. Adjacent to Daphne Steele, a second building currently under construction will be home to the first NHS Community Diagnostic Hub to be co-located on a UK university campus (providing access to thousands of diagnostic tests, including MRI and CT, for people from across the region), in addition to related diagnostics teaching facilities and a health and well-being innovation center for local entrepreneurs and startups. A third building with a primary care center is in the planning and design stage, with the engagement of local constituents to maximize community well-being impacts.

Innovative teaching laboratory for allied health professionals.

Like most regions around the world, the United Kingdom faces a severe shortage in trained health professionals, with more than 46,000 vacancies in nursing positions across England in 2022. A key aim of the NHIC is to create a leading training center for health fields, helping to address key workforce gaps across northern England and beyond. The campus will facilitate rapid expansion of the University's courses in nursing, midwifery, and allied health professions, as well as new course areas, such as dental hygiene, dental therapy, and diagnostic radiography. Within five years of opening, the Daphne Steele Building is expected to generate 60% growth in the provision of trained workers in several key allied health fields, including nursing and midwifery.

About half of the Daphne Steele Building is used as teaching space, with facilities to train students in nursing, midwifery, occupational therapy, paramedics, physiotherapy, podiatry, and other fields. The building is specifically designed to recreate a patient's journey as part of an innovative simulated environment for allied health professional education. For example, there is an ambulance simulator for paramedic training; a "community flat" with rooms that simulate a home environment where health professionals may interact with patients and their families; and high-fidelity skill labs the replicate busy hospital settings, with state-of-the-art equipment and mannequins. Much of the teaching space is designed to be modular and flexible, enabling students and instructors to work in small or larger groups, and encouraging students in different courses and medical specializations to interact, in order to cut down existing silos between disciplines.

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Meets and exceeds WELL standards for indoor air quality and water quality, with continuous monitoring via sensors.
- Materials selected to minimize indoor pollutants and support air quality (e.g., carpets with a weaving technology that traps fine dust particles from the air).
- Healthy food options and the promotion of healthy eating at the on-site cafeteria.
- Filtered drinking water dispensers throughout the building.
- Community garden allotments and edible landscaping (herb garden, fruit bushes/trees) available on the university campus.
- Outdoor terraces and rooftop garden for physical activity and fresh air.
- Transit-friendly location, with infrastructure to support cycling.

Mental & Spiritual

- Multistory glass-roofed central atrium, and large windows in other spaces, to maximize exposure to natural light throughout the building.
- Biophilic design elements to promote mental well-being– e.g., timber finishes, large plant wall in the central atrium, large windows with views of nature.
- Special nature-inspired color schemes used as a wayfinding guide and to create a sense of place and arrival in each area for occupants and visitors.
- Spaces designed to optimize sound management for students, teachers, clinicians, and patients.
- Diverse and distributed quiet study spaces for students and workspaces for staff.
- Mental health support services provided for students and staff.

Social

- Variety of dedicated social spaces and informal breakout spaces scattered throughout the building for students, faculty, staff, and visitors (e.g., outdoor glass-enclosed patio on the rooftop, small glass-walled booths overlooking the central atrium, large ground-floor student lounge with areas for eating, studying, and play).

Civic & Community

- Developing the campus and buildings as a public-facing community space that welcomes and serves everyone.
- Delivering expanded health services to residents from throughout the region, to address health inequities and improve health outcomes (e.g., new NHS diagnostic center, award-winning podiatry clinic, etc.).
- Collecting community inputs to create priorities and to inform planning and design of the new campus and its offerings.
- Honoring the legacy of Daphne Steele for her dedication to equitable health.

Environmental

- BREEAM Excellent rating, supporting University of Huddersfield's broader sustainability strategy, including achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- Indoor finishes use natural materials and recycled content as much as possible.
- Energy efficient LED lighting, which uses sensors to respond to the amount of daylight in the space.
- High-efficiency air source heat pump for heating/cooling and hot water generation.
- Rooftop solar panels.
- Water conserving appliances in restrooms.

Economic & Financial

- Expanding workforce training for jobs in high-demand health-related fields.
- Community wealth-building through better health, education opportunities, and entrepreneurship.
- Urban regeneration, economic development, and job creation impacts for the region through the development of the campus and its new programs.

Website References

- https://www.hud.ac.uk/about/national-health-innovation/daphne-steele-building/
- https://www.hud.ac.uk/about/national-health-innovation/
- https://www.hud.ac.uk/sustainability/wellbuildingstandard/

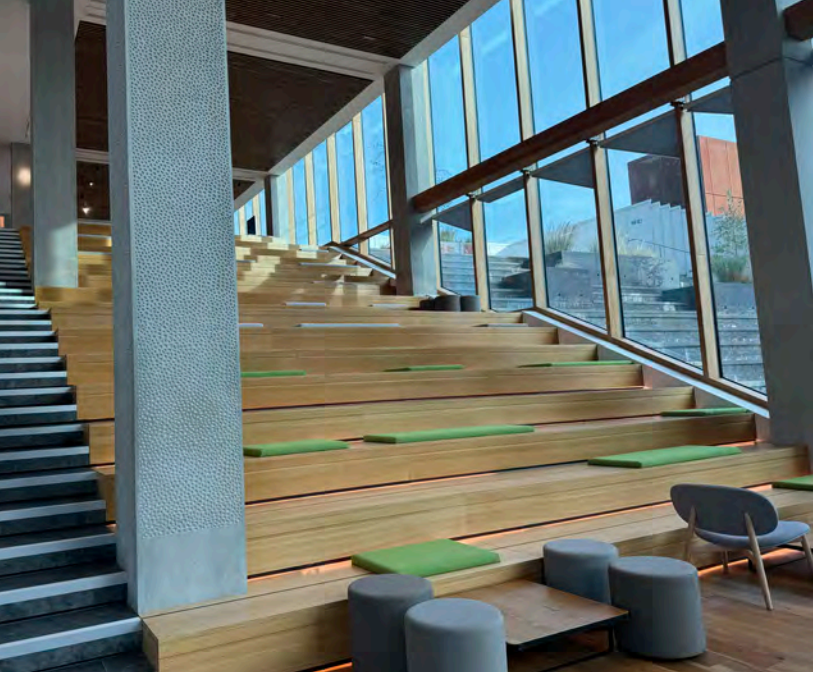
The Spine

Liverpool, United Kingdom

Photo Courtesy of The Spine

The Spine is a 14-story, state-of-the-art, healthy and sustainable office building, specially designed to serve as the new northern headquarters for the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). Located near Liverpool's city center, the building is a flagship project within the first phase of the Liverpool Knowledge Quarter's Paddington Village development – a $1.26 billion (£1b) initiative to create a 30-acre urban village and innovation district focused on life sciences, technology, education, and health. The Spine building was a $49 million (£39m) investment, developed as a collaboration between the Liverpool City Council and RCP, after RCP selected Liverpool to be the home of its new Northern Centre of Clinical Excellence (RCP's first expansion outside of London in its 500-year history). The overall aim for The Spine was to create one of the healthiest buildings in the world and an iconic design that evokes a narrative of the human body and the pioneering work of RCP – while simultaneously being a "backbone" for the longer-term development of a life sciences innovation district in Liverpool.

- 14-story Grade A commercial building with offices, clinical exams, research, training, and events
- Serves as the northern headquarters for the Royal College of Physicians (RCP)
- 152,000 sq.ft. net area
- Opened in 2021
- Developers: Liverpool City Council, in collaboration with Royal College of Physicians and AHR Architects
- Certifications: WELL v2 Pilot Core Platinum certification for the building; WELL v2 Pilot Platinum for the 70,000 sq.ft. occupied by RCP; BREEAM Outstanding; IACC Green Star Gold; ECOsmart Gold



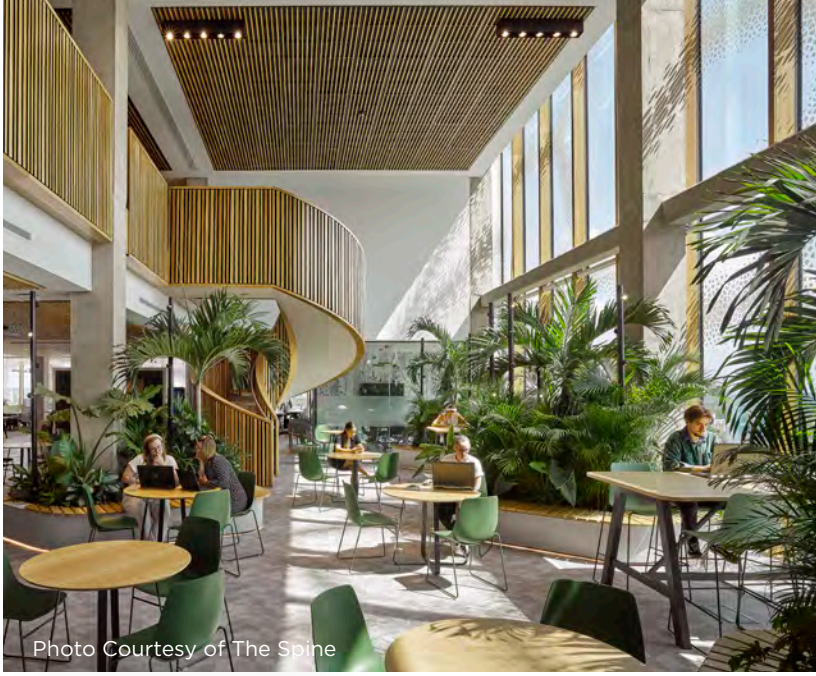


Photo Courtesy of The Spine

As the anchor tenant, RCP occupies seven floors of The Spine, with purpose-built spaces that accommodate its main activities – i.e., delivering bespoke, high-stakes postgraduate examinations to clinical professionals from across the healthcare landscape, both in the United Kingdom and internationally. The RCP spaces include facilities for research, medical training, examinations, and conferencing, with open-plan office spaces and meeting/conference rooms, as well a ground-floor public café and informal events space. The other floors in the building provide flexible workspaces for like-minded industries, conference/exhibition and dining/entertainment spaces for hire, a large bicycle storage and shower facility, and undercroft parking.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Designed from the ground up to be a health-enhancing building that exceeds WELL Platinum standards.

When the GWI research team toured The Spine, Rob Hopkins – lead architect for this project – noted he was "given a blank canvas" with a simple mission to design the healthiest building possible, in order to represent the RCP's core values and its credibility in medicine. Hopkins said his goal was to design a building where people are healthy, happy, and productive, so that they walk out of the building feeling healthier than when they arrived. The design team chose the WELL Building Standard to support the project's mission, so that multiple aspects of wellness (air, water, nourishment, light, movement, thermal comfort, sound, materials, mind, and community) informed all building design decisions from the earliest stages. In fact, Hopkins said that this project introduced a whole new design process, whereby every proposed feature was discussed with the client (i.e., physicians from RCP) and was benchmarked against research-supported evidence. With certification standards informing the building's design from the very start, the wellness design process was made easier as compared to adding the certification after the fact. Hopkins estimated that building to WELL standards added only 2% to the cost (excluding the cost of plants). The project also aimed to go beyond the certification requirements, and it succeeded in doing so. Upon completion, The Spine earned 109 out of 110 WELL Version 2 Pilot points, which is one of the highest scores of any WELL building in the world, and well beyond the 80 points required to achieve a Platinum rating. Since opening, the on-site workplace manager has worked to educate workers and visitors about the building's healthy features, such as adding signage throughout the building, posting educational materials on the RCP intranet, and incorporating information into conference/events materials.

The Spine's WELL Platinum certification and health-enhancing features are complemented by its many advanced sustainability features. The building has earned a BREEAM Outstanding rating, with an emphasis on energy efficiency via smart-building management systems and sensors; use of natural, sustainable, and recycled materials in the design (e.g., flooring made from recycled plastics); and recycling and waste reduction practices to mitigate the environmental impact of its ongoing operations (e.g., food menus designed around seasonal and locally sourced ingredients).

Building a visual representation of the human body.

The Spine draws on a narrative of the human body and its abstract representation as the key design concept – features that not only support its mission to be a healthy building, but also evoke the world-leading work of RCP as its main tenant. The building takes its name from the striking geometric staircase on its north side, which resembles the human vertebrae, while also offering panoramic views across Liverpool and encouraging people to use the stairs. In the Atrium on the upper floors, the double-story sky gardens, filled with high-oxygen producing plants, represent the "lungs" of the building. On the ground floor, exposed concrete columns are molded to reflect the trabecular system within human bones, which is the strongest part of a bone for load bearing, shock absorption, and regeneration. The distinctive design on the building's fritted glass façade or "exoskeleton" utilizes 23 million individual polygons applied in a Voronoi pattern that can be found in human skin cells, while the ground-floor café ceiling pattern mimics a protein cell structure. In addition to its biological symbolism, this biomorphic design element provides several health-enhancing biophilic benefits (*as described in more detail below*), in addition to controlling solar heat gain.

"In the design process, every proposed feature was discussed with the client (physicians from RCP) and benchmarked against research-supported evidence."

– Rob Hopkins, lead architect of the Spine

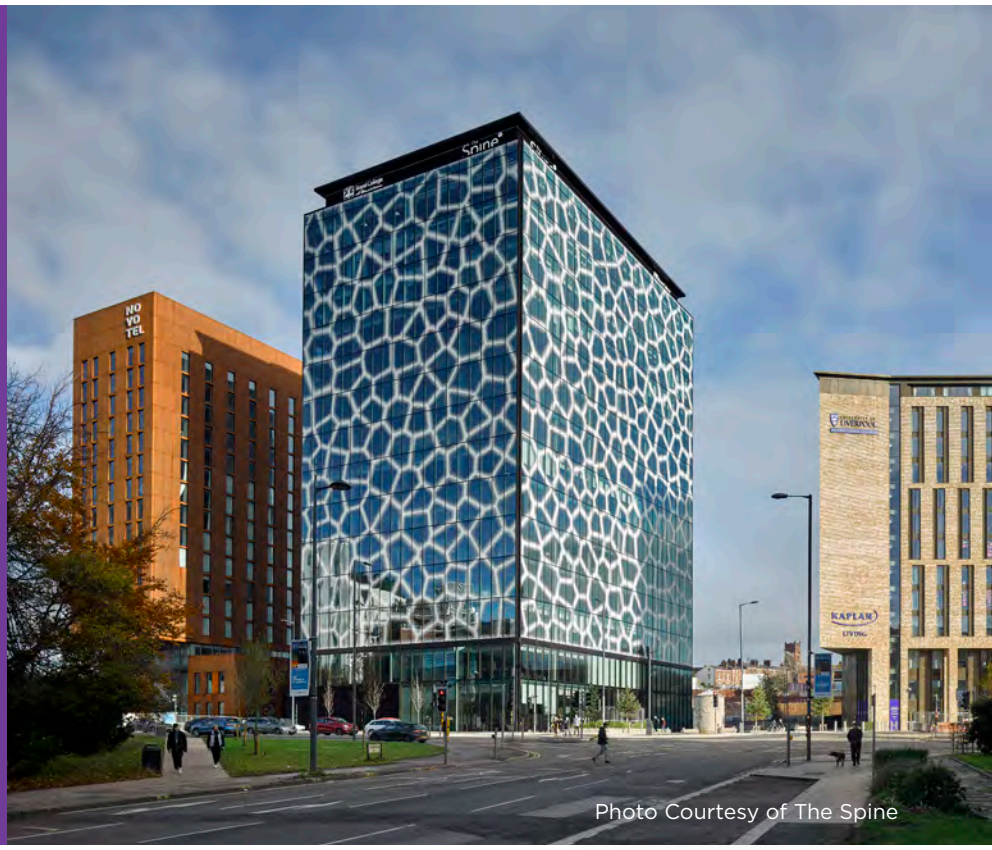


Photo Courtesy of The Spine

Photos Courtesy of The Spine

Innovative expressions of biophilia to support occupants' health and well-being.

The Spine uses a sophisticated and in-depth application of biophilic design principles, with features that go far beyond just the typical approaches of green plants and natural light. The building's designers conducted a survey of RCP staff about their work and needs, using this data to thoughtfully select 5 or 6 specific biophilic design patterns (based on Terrapin Bright Green's 14 Biophilic Patterns[1]) that would have the greatest, evidence-based impact on the physical and mental health and well-being of the building's users. For example:

- **Natural Analogues:** In the biophilic patterns, the "Natural Analogues" principles focus on using organic materials, patterns, and textures in the built environment to evoke a connection to nature. The Spine thoughtfully delivers these principles through its biomorphic design narrative inspired by the human body (*see discussion above*), which appears throughout the building. The extensive use of wood, clay, and other natural materials throughout the interior fittings and furnishings provides a visual and tactile connection to nature. Sustainably sourced wood is used throughout flooring, ceilings, walls, and furniture. Clay plaster was specifically chosen for acoustic absorption in the ceiling because it is a natural material that also helps to balance humidity. All of the interior designs subtly mimic the color palettes and repeating patterns found in nature, which have a naturally calming effect on the mind. Echoing a tree rising through the building, an earthier color palette on the lower floors merges into greener, leafier colors and patterns and then to blue tones on the upper floors.
- **Nature in the Space:** The "Nature in the Space" biophilic principles emphasize bringing natural elements (e.g., plants, water, light, sounds, scents) directly into spaces. Like many healthy buildings, The Spine brings direct, physical elements of nature into the indoor environment via its extensive use of indoor plants (especially in the upper floor sky gardens and ground floor plant wall), as well as its floor-to-ceiling windows to maximize exposure to natural light and provide a visual connection to nature.

The building's most unique element is the biomorphic Voronoi patterns etched onto its exterior glass windows, which simultaneously address several biophilic principles ("Dynamic & Diffuse Light," "Connection with Natural Systems," "Biomorphic Forms & Patterns," "Complexity & Order"). When the sun shines on the building, the interior spaces are bathed in dappled internal shadows that shift throughout the day, reminiscent of a forest canopy and the Japanese practice of forest bathing. This dynamic, changing natural light brings awareness of natural systems and seasons and helps occupants to synchronize their circadian rhythms – and is done in a much more cost-effective and natural way than investing in a high-tech circadian lighting system for the whole building.

[1] https://www.terrapinbrightgreen.com/report/14-patterns/

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Meets and exceeds WELL standards for indoor air quality.
- Stairway design encourages physical activity and enjoyment of outdoor viewscapes.
- State-of-the-art thermal controls to ensure individual comfort (e.g., workstations have a personal dashboard allowing workers to control the temperature and lighting in their immediate vicinity).
- Indoor materials and furnishings aim to minimize off-gassing, reducing occupants' exposure to potentially harmful chemicals in the air.
- The ground-floor public cafeteria ("The Base Café") and an on-site event catering service/commercial kitchen emphasize healthy and sustainable food options (e.g., plant-based food, locally sourced ingredients).
- Filtered drinking water accessible within the entire building; café offers a hydration station with infused waters.
- Physical activity programming offered for employees.
- Lactation room to support new mothers.
- Building is located in a transit-friendly neighborhood, with on-site infrastructure to support cycling (74 bike storage spaces, shower facilities).

Mental & Spiritual

- Innovative biophilic design features throughout the building interiors to deliver a sense of calm, comfort, and safety; reduce stress; and improve cognitive performance (e.g., color palettes and patterns that mimic nature, extensive use of wood and natural materials) (*see text above for more details*).
- Bespoke facade featuring 1,400 unique glass panels that reduce glare, noise, and heat, in addition to biophilic benefits via the biomorphic Voronoi patterns etched onto the glass.
- Internal "sky garden" on the top floors, and plant wall on the ground floor, filled with award-winning plant installations that emphasize stress reduction and air purification features. The absence of an automated irrigation system encourages staff to connect with the plant life and engage with their natural internal environment.
- Floor-to-ceiling windows and design features maximize natural light in all work/activity areas (e.g., all workstations are within 25 feet of a window).
- Optimizing acoustic absorption and humidity using natural materials (clay plaster) for the ceilings.

Social

- Ground-floor public cafeteria ("The Base Café") serves as a community and social space, offering weekly events such as board game nights that are open to local residents.
- Several floors of the building are used as publicly available event spaces and emphasize their healthy and sustainable features (natural daylight, healthy catering, extensive green plants, etc.). Those using the facilities for external events are educated about the building's wellness features.

Environmental

- Smart-building management system and sensors to regulate temperature and lighting (e.g., ensuring that only occupied spaces and provided with heating/cooling and lighting when required).
- Use of LED lighting, saving 50% of energy costs as compared to traditional lighting.
- Indoor materials and finishes are predominantly natural, responsibly sourced, and minimize harmful materials – e.g., low VOC paints used throughout the building; all wood used in the building (including furniture) is sustainable hardwood; flooring and wallpaper made out of 95% recycled plastic bottles; carpets are made from recycled fishing nets and are recyclable.
- Café and catering services operate sustainably, with practices to reduce/eliminate paper waste and to minimize and recycle food waste (e.g., café offers used coffee grounds for free to guests, for use in composting).

Economic & Financial

- The creation of The Spine and the new RCP headquarters is seen as a transformational investment for expanding the life sciences cluster, and associated high-quality jobs and housing, in Liverpool's Knowledge Quarter and Paddington Village development.

Website References

- https://kqliverpool.co.uk/paddington-village/the-spine/
- https://www.spacesatthespine.co.uk/

Urbanest Battersea Student Accommodations

London, United Kingdom

Photo Courtesy of Urbanest

Founded in 2008, urbanest is a leading student accommodation provider that works closely with major universities in London, including King's College, London School of Economics, and University College London, as well as international universities with campuses in London (such as NYU). Urbanest Battersea is urbanest's newest and ninth location in central London, and its first project to achieve Passivhaus and to pursue WELL certification and net-zero carbon in operation. The project commenced in 2021, and it opened to receive its first student residents in the fall of 2024. The student housing development comprises three high-rise towers that are connected by a four-story podium with common amenity spaces and courtyard gardens on the lower levels. The development houses over 850 students in private rooms, en-suite rooms, and studio apartments.

- Purpose-built university student accommodation (serving multiple universities), part of the larger urbanest Battersea mixed-use development that also includes commercial and retail spaces
- 0.495-acre site (2,005 sq.m.)
- 245,838 sq.ft. building area for the student housing
- 853 student beds (private rooms, en-suite rooms, and studio apartments), in three high-rise towers (11-19 stories)
- Unit prices: $415–667 (£329-529) per week
- Opened in fall 2024 (construction completed in September 2024)
- Developer, owner, and operator: urbanest (in collaboration with Henriksen Studio)
- Certifications: WELL for Residential Pilot, Passivhaus certified, BREEAM Outstanding

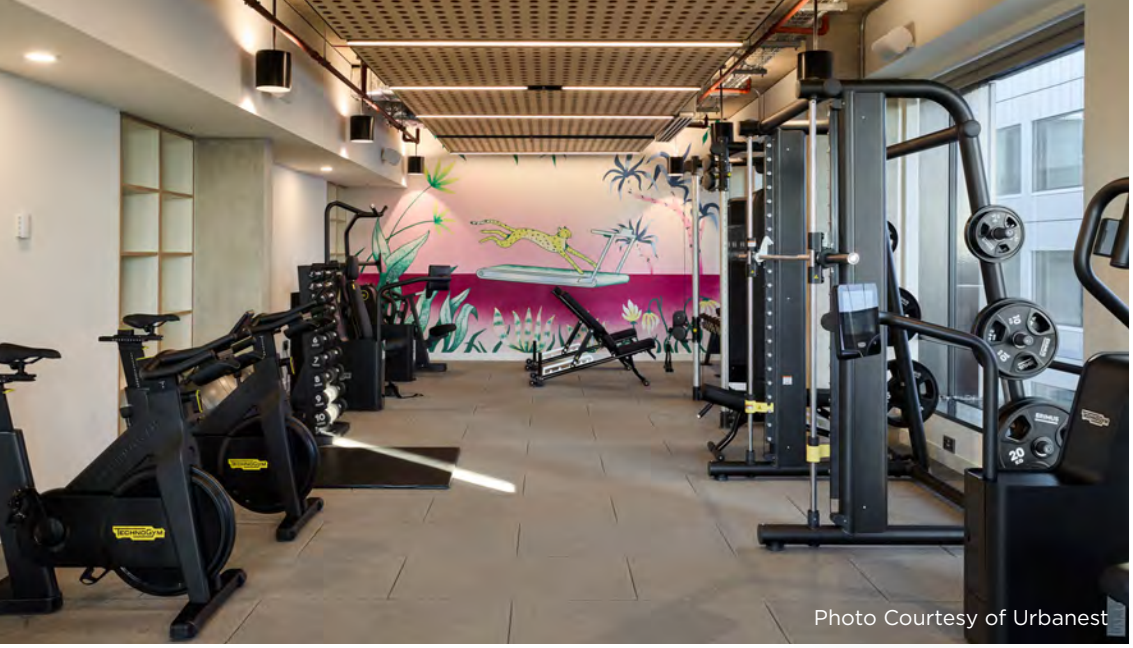


Photo Courtesy of Urbanest

While the student accommodation is the focus of this case study, urbanest Battersea is a larger mixed-use, ultra-sustainable redevelopment project, which also includes a 40,000 sq.ft. commercial office building, affordable enterprise and community spaces and other retail uses on the ground floor, and over 21,000 sq.ft. of high-quality landscaped public spaces. The project was conceived as a gateway at the northern edge of the wider master plan for Battersea's new Design and Tech Quarter (BDTQ). Along with improvements to the surrounding public realm and improved connections and accessibility to Battersea Park Road, the project is a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider BDTQ and Battersea neighborhood.

Distinctive Approaches to Wellness

Meeting students where they are.

Since urbanest specializes in the operation of student housing, all of the wellness features are designed to meet the needs of student residents and their lifestyles. Urbanest Battersea offers a range of units, from single rooms in shared apartments to private studio apartments (with both private and shared bathrooms, as well as shared kitchen areas), to accommodate different preferences and budgets, including a percentage of affordable rooms (as defined by the Greater London Authority). All of the Battersea student apartments provide an array of facilities to support comfort, wellness, and productivity, including sustainable heating and cooling systems, advanced air filtration, noise-dampening design features, high-quality beds for a good night's sleep, spacious desks, and free 200 Mbps broadband and high-speed Wi-Fi throughout the buildings. There is an on-site gym, a fitness/yoga studio, and a large bike storage facility. There are ample communal spaces, quiet spaces for studying, versatile rooms with city views, and enclosed outdoor roof terraces for parties, events, and group exercise. Digital bulletin boards throughout the common areas are used to display wellness reminders/tips and educational messages about the buildings' health and sustainability features. The paint colors, artwork (through curation with local artists), furniture, and lighting are all designed with students' mental wellness in mind. For safety and security, the complex operates a 24-hour staffed reception in the lobby and a student support team. To enrich student life, urbanest Battersea operates a calendar of social and wellness programs and activities, in collaboration with its partner universities. The development is situated in a very walkable neighborhood and within a 2-minute walk of a Zone 1 underground station and other public transit. It is located across from the iconic Battersea Power Station development, giving students close access to hundreds of shops and restaurants, grocery stores, cinemas, and other leisure opportunities, including one of the largest open green areas in London at Battersea Park.

Integrating sustainability with well-being objectives.

Urbanest Battersea aims to be ultra-sustainable and net-zero carbon in operation. It achieved Passivhaus certification in December 2024, with Henriksen Studio in London as the Passivhaus designers and WELL certifiers, becoming the largest Passivhaus project in the United Kingdom and the largest Passivhaus student housing/university building in Europe. Passivhaus is a voluntary standard that uses a rigorous whole-building approach to sustainability, aiming to provide a high level of occupant comfort while minimizing energy usage and carbon footprint. The urbanest Battersea project employed energy-efficient and low-carbon concrete technologies, construction methods, and design. The buildings minimize "thermal bridge" as much as possible, and they incorporate very high levels of insulation, high-performance windows, airtight building fabric, and a mechanical ventilation system with highly efficient heat recovery. The overall design aims for maximum energy-efficiency while also delivering comfort and a healthy environment for occupants. For example, the mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system reduces the energy consumption of the building significantly, and its air filtration ensures higher air quality, which is especially important for occupants who suffer from asthma or allergies.

In addition to its Passivhaus credentials, urbanest Battersea is the first student housing project to participate in the WELL for Residential Pilot, which is an International Well Building Institute (IWBI) program in development to test and refine how the WELL standard can best apply to different types of residential spaces. During the pilot stage, this project along with others will work with the IWBI to provide feedback to help refine the new standard – ensuring that it is robust and globally applicable in multiple residential settings, in order to design, build, and maintain homes that are resilient and health-enhancing. According to Anthony Mellalieu, urbanest's Chief Operating Officer, sustainability and well-being are inherently compatible, and there is considerable overlap between Passivhaus, BREEAM, and WELL standards in terms of design, construction, and operations. For example, as part of the window design process, Passivhaus requires a "comfort check" on all windows, to ensure that occupants close to the triple-glazed windows do not experience cold temperatures radiating from the windows.

"Sustainability and well-being are inherently compatible."

– Anthony Mellalieu, Chief Operating Officer, urbanest

Photo Courtesy of Urbanest

A strong value proposition to students, parents, and investors.

As developer, owner, and operator of nine purpose-built student housing properties (and counting) across Central London, urbanest has a vested interest in delivering high-quality design and construction so that projects will perform optimally and maintain their asset value over time. Therefore, ongoing operations and energy efficiency are very important considerations, along with providing the best possible living environment for student residents. In fact, urbanest believes that going forward, sustainability and student well-being will increasingly be an important competitive factor for university partners, for students and their parents, and for investors and lenders. For example, on the King's College London student housing webpage, the description of urbanest Battersea promises to "deliver a living environment offering controlled air temperature across the year, using less carbon and 90% less energy for its operations. If you care about the environment and making a difference, then this accommodation, with its zero net carbon operational emissions, is one for you." The Battersea project is the first urbanest student housing to pursue Passivhaus, net zero in operation, and WELL. It is serving as a test case for the company to make these design/construction credentials a brand standard in the future. Urbanest is already working on a second, even larger scale Passivhaus project at Canary Wharf, to be completed in 2026.

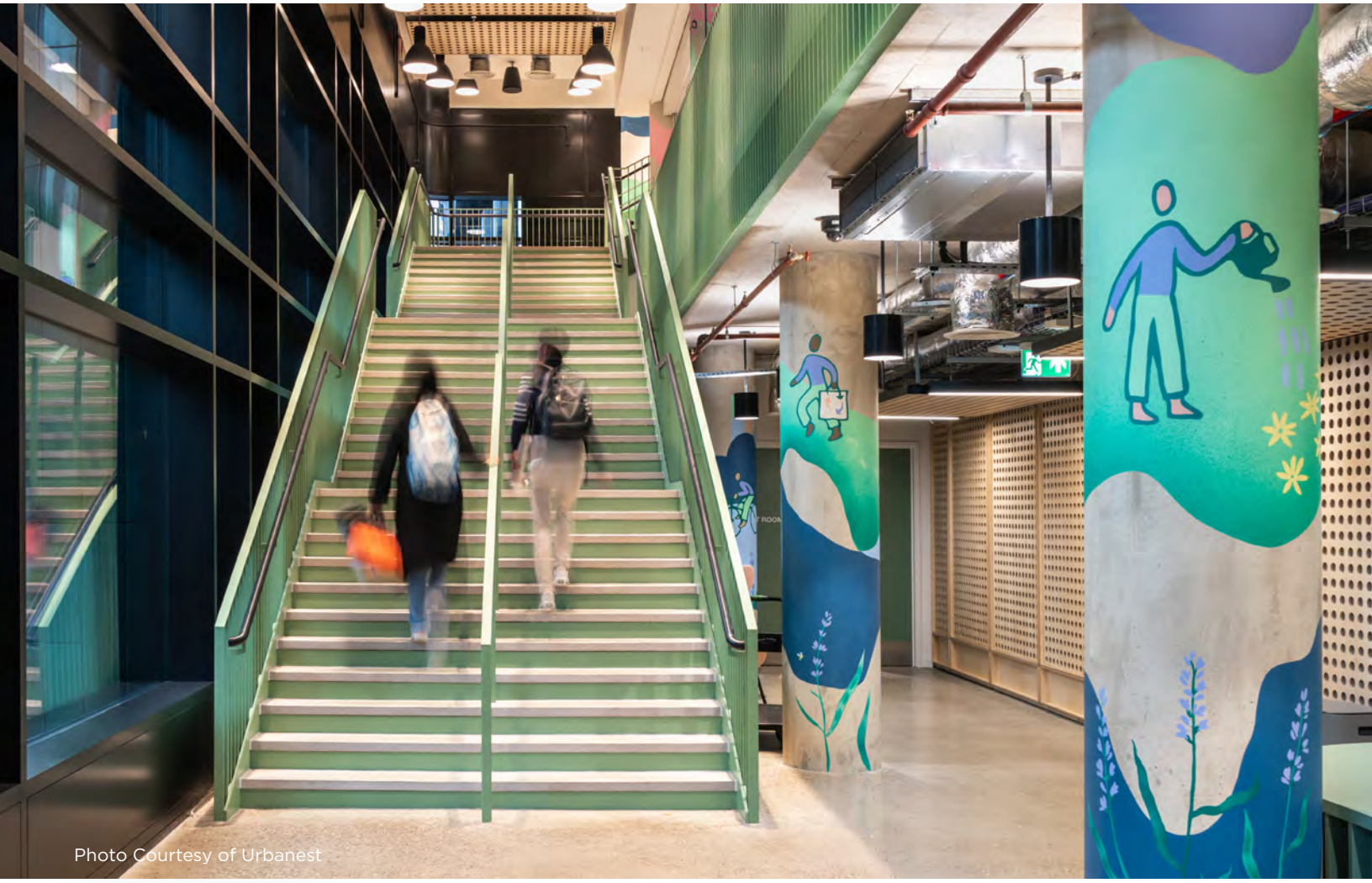


Photo Courtesy of Urbanest

How This Project Addresses the Dimensions of Wellness

Physical

- Meets and exceeds WELL standards for indoor air quality and water quality.
- Thermal comfort via energy-efficient heating and cooling systems (air conditioning is not common in the United Kingdom, especially in student housing).
- Well-equipped on-site gym and fitness/yoga studio room, with city views (free for use by all student residents).
- Free-to-use bicycles and bike storage.
- Walkable to grocery store, restaurants, entertainment, and shopping, and easy public transit access to university facilities.
- Outdoor activity spaces, including access to a walking trail along the River Thames and an abundance of sporting facilities.

Mental & Spiritual

- Ample quiet workspaces and study nooks scattered throughout the buildings, with extensive natural light and outdoor views.
- Roof terraces with expansive views of the city, outfitted with glazed sides to ensure safety.
- Safe and secure building with a 24/7 staffed concierge desk in lobby, plus a free student assistance phone helpline.
- Ventilation equipment with acoustic performance that meets Passivhaus standards. Enhanced noise dampening, such as high-performing façade and triple-glazed windows to ensure that the internal spaces are quiet amidst typical urban noise.
- Commissioned nature-inspired art – including from local artists – in common areas, used as visual cues to promote wellness.
- Video screens throughout the building (hallways, elevators, etc.) provide educational information that promotes sustainable/wellness behaviors and building features.

Social

- Ample social and common spaces in the buildings for gatherings and events, including a pool table, television lounges, and indoor amphitheater with a large movie screen.
- Wellness and social programming run in conjunction with university partners.
- A fair housing policy is in place to ensure access to housing without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, gender identity, and familiar status.

- The buildings' bold colors and glazed terracotta facades draw on the industrial heritage of the site.
- The development's other component parts will offer over 21,000 sq.ft. of landscaped public spaces, animated by commercial and community activities – e.g., retail, restaurant/café, a pub, and cultural events in the EBU Enterprise Business Unit (EBU) – to create a safe and lively public realm.

Environmental

- Largest Passivhaus certified building in the United Kingdom (as of spring 2025).
- Meets the stringent air tightness requirements of Passivhaus through rigorous detailing and on-site construction process management and detailed interdisciplinary coordination on all aspects of the building, from door thresholds to window openings.
- Minimizes on-site waste and utilizes advanced low-carbon construction methods – such as using prefabricated, low-carbon "cassettes" offsite technology to reduce embodied carbon, structural steel, deliveries to site, and waste.
- Low-energy construction concept makes efficient use of the sun, internal heat sources, and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, rendering conventional heating systems unnecessary. This allows for space heating and cooling-related energy savings of up to 90% compared with typical buildings and over 75% compared to average new builds.
- Passive cooling draws its energy from an ambient loop, where the cooling is balanced by the hot water generation to the showers. 100% of electrical supply is from renewable sources.

Economic & Financial

- The project provides vital high-quality, affordable, and mid-market student accommodation that can help mitigate acute housing market pressures in London.
- 35% of the student bedrooms are priced as affordable in accordance with the affordability criteria set by the Greater London Authority.
- This project is positioned as a catalyst for the regeneration of the new Battersea Design and Tech Quarter (BDTQ). A new student population will create demand for local businesses. It is estimated that 850+ students living there will spend an estimated £4.2m locally each year.
- The mixed-use portion of the project includes approximately 19,000 sq.ft. of space at subsidized/affordable rates to support small businesses and start-ups in the area.

Website Reference

- https://uk.urbanest.com/locations/battersea/

Acknowledgements

Build Well To Live Well: Case Studies, Volume 1 was nearly two years in the making, and the research process started with a visit to Rockaway Village in Queens, New York in January 2024. This volume of thirteen case studies – spanning the United States and the United Kingdom – came together with the help of many generous people who identified and connected us to projects, guided us on site visits and tours, and provided important project background and insights. First and foremost, we are deeply indebted to **Teri Slavik-Tsuyuki**, co-chair of **GWI's Wellness Communities and Real Estate Initiative**, for being our research advisor, introducing us to thought leaders and practitioners in wellness real estate, arranging site visits, reading our report drafts, and providing valuable feedback. Initiative co-chair **Jean-François Garneau** also provided invaluable project suggestions.

We want to give special thanks to our colleagues at the **International Well Building Institute**, especially **Rachel Hodgdon, Ann Marie Aguilar, and Lydia Szewczyk** for facilitating visits to innovative projects across England and Scotland, and to our colleagues at the **Center for Active Design**, **Sara Karerat and Nadine Rachid**, for their insights and introductions to exemplar projects in the United States.

We visited many more projects than we can feature, but all of the site visits have informed this report by illustrating the wide variety of project settings and approaches for creating wellness real estate, as well as the diversity of occupants and users who benefit from these projects. We want to thank the individuals who have spent time with us to explain the vision, process, design principles, operations, and user experiences of various projects, and who connected us with other experts and gave us project tours, including the ones we were not able to showcase in this report: Timothy Anscombe-Bell, Heather Beck, Giuliano Camerini, Will Cox, Nicholas Dagen Bloom, Tim Gledstone, Randy Johnson, James Nelmes, and Jake Warrington.

As always, we thank Susie Ellis and Nancy Davis for being the biggest supporters and champions of GWI research, and for making this work freely available to the public.

For the thirteen wellness real estate projects featured in this report, we benefitted from the time and expertise of many experts:

United States

American Cancer Society Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation Hope Lodge© (Texas): Ron Stelmarski, Design Director and Principal, Perkins&Will; Tori Wickard, Senor Project Architect and Senior Associate, Perkins&Will; and Mary Dickinson, Regional Director of Regenerative Design and Principal, Perkins&Will.

Fox Point Farms (California): Brian Grover, Founder and Developer of Fox Point Farms, Managing Partner at Nolan Communities.

Rancho Mission Viejo (California): Amaya Genaro, Vice President of Community Services, Rancho Mission Viejo.

Rockaway Village (New York): Ebony Young, Deputy Borough President of Queens, New York; and Jonathan Imperial, Assistant to the Deputy Borough President of Queens, New York.

Spring Creek Towers (New York): Andrew Kane, Managing Director, Asset Management, The Brooksville Company; Nanda Prabhakar, Executive Director, The Opportunity Hub; and Jesse Miller, Farm Manager, Spring Creek Towers Farm.

The Mather, Tysons (Virginia): Mary Leary, President and CEO at Mather; Meredith Boyle, Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at Mather; William Myers, Assistant Vice President of Wellness Strategies at Mather; and Cate O'Brien, Senior Vice President at Mather Institute.

The Pearl (Maryland): Jeffrey Abramson, Partner, The Tower Companies; and Luke Lanciano, Director of Sustainability, The Tower Companies.

The Picket Fence Concept Home (Pennsylvania): Dennis Steigerwalt, President, Housing Innovation Alliance; and Nancy Keenan, President and CEO, DAHLIN Architecture|Planning|Interiors.

United Kingdom

Barclays Bank Campus, Buchanan Wharf (Glasgow): Donna McCann, Director, Barclays.

Brent Cross Town (London): Staff at the Brent Cross Town Visitor Pavilion.

Daphne Steele Building, University of Huddersfield National Health Innovation Campus (Huddersfield): Liz Towns-Andrews, Director of Research and Enterprise, University of Huddersfield.

The Spine (Liverpool): Cathy Hardman, Workplace Manager, Royal College of Physicians; and Rob Hopkins, lead architect for The Spine and Director, Architecture, AHR.

Urbanest Battersea Student Accommodations (London): Anthony Mellalieu, Interim Chief Operating Officer at Urbanest; Angus Kearin, Head of Development at Urbanest; Tina Zivkovic, Operation Teams Assistant at Urbanest; and Warren Stanley, Associate Passivhaus Consultant at Henriksen Studio.

Strategic Partner

ALDAR PROPERTIES PJSC

aldar.com

Aldar is the leading real estate developer, manager, and investor in Abu Dhabi, with a growing presence across the United Arab Emirates, the Middle East North Africa, and Europe. The company has two core business segments, Aldar Development and Aldar Investment.

Aldar Development is a master developer of a 62 million sqm strategic landbank, creating integrated and thriving communities across Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Ras Al Khaimah's most desirable destinations. The delivery of Aldar's developments is managed by Aldar Projects, which is also a key partner of the Abu Dhabi government in delivering housing and infrastructure projects across the UAE's capital. Internationally, Aldar Development wholly owns UK real estate developer London Square, as well as a majority stake in leading Egyptian real estate development company, SODIC.

Aldar Investment houses a core asset management business comprising a portfolio of $13 billion worth of investment grade and income-generating real estate assets diversified across retail, residential, commercial, logistics, and hospitality segments. It manages four core platforms: Aldar Investment Properties, Aldar Hospitality, Aldar Education, and Aldar Estates.

This report was made possible through the generous support of our research sponsors, the collective contributions of GWI donors, and the ongoing commitment of our GWI Ambassadors. Your support fuels our mission to advance research that informs and inspires a healthier, more well world.

STRATEGIC PARTNER

ALDAR

RESEARCH SPONSORS

FOUNTAIN LIFE

LEGACY HOTEL & RESIDENCES

GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE™
EMPOWERING WELLNESS WORLDWIDE

333 S.E. 2nd Avenue, Suite 2048
Miami, FL 33131

WWW.GLOBALWELLNESSINSTITUTE.ORG