



Sustainable Construction

How to Make Your Walls Environmentally Friendly

Many of the following tips cost little or no more than conventional wall construction and, if they are incorporated into your building at the design stage, like most energy efficient measures, they could pay for themselves in a short time.



Use local contractors and suppliers whenever possible.



Use locally resourced building materials. (For local purchasing advice contact Somerset Foodlinks - 01458 257438).



Reclaimed bricks/stone are environmentally friendly options.



Minimise materials wastage by incorporating the use of standard sizes to avoid unnecessary cutting and be sure not to order more than you need.



Use low impact insulation, manufactured from natural or recycled materials as an alternative to conventional mineral fibre, fibreglass, or plastic based products.



Check the U or K-Value of your insulation: the lower it is, the less you will need to install.



Ensure an effective damp proof course is used. This will prevent the insulation becoming wet which would result in reduced efficiency.



Remember that any gaps in the insulation will reduce its effectiveness.



The intended use of the building will determine the most appropriate thickness and density of the walls. Rooms surrounded by thicker, denser walls will take longer to heat initially but will effectively store background heat. Rooms with thin, lightweight walls will heat up quickly but will not store background heat.



External insulation, with a timber cladding rain-screen, can be used as an alternative to brick/block cavity wall construction. Choose locally sourced timber where possible. At least be sure the timber has come from sustainably managed woodlands and is approved by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).



Plants grown up exterior walls will provide an attractive covering whilst helping to insulate against wind-chill and frost damage. Evergreens provide all year round weather protection. However, ivy should not be allowed to grow directly against walls as their roots may cause surface damage to mortar and brickwork.



Use non-toxic, oil and water based paints, and preservatives, with low or no Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).



Try to recycle any packaging and excess building materials.

These are guidance notes only and should not be taken as rules. In order to maximise the benefits to yourselves and minimise impact on the environment, it is recommended that you seek professional guidance before embarking on a project of this nature.

For further information contact:

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