

EDITION 1

Wellbeing by Design

TR·STUDIO

TR Studio is a London-based architecture and interiors practice with a passion for beautiful design. Since 2015, we've brought a cohesive approach to residential and boutique commercial projects across the UK and worldwide.

We create timeless projects imbued with warmth and feeling, which are personally tailored to our clients' needs. We are known for a refined, contemporary aesthetic that blends craftsmanship, natural materials, a strong sense of spatial harmony and a feeling of laidback luxury.

TR•STUDIO





Foreword

BY TOM RUTT

Welcome to the first edition of our annual design compendium, where we explore the forces shaping how we live today and how we will live next. In our work across residential and commercial architecture and interiors in the UK and internationally, we are observing a decisive shift: wellbeing is no longer an added layer to design; it is a primary driver. Accelerated by the Covid pandemic yet rooted in longer-term cultural change, we are increasingly focussed on creating environments that actively support physical health, mental clarity and longevity.

Great design is not only physical; it is a feeling. The spaces we inhabit engage our senses immediately, shaping how we live, move and feel. Design influences our habits, sleep and daily rhythms, while elements such as light, volume, texture and acoustics create atmospheres that can enhance happiness, comfort, productivity and overall health. Natural light and good ventilation support a healthy indoor environment; well-planned layouts and organised spaces simplify everyday routines and reduce stress. Materials, colour and connections to nature can foster calm and emotional balance. While each individual has a personal perspective, buildings tend to influence people in broadly similar ways because we share fundamental human needs and experiences. Juhani Pallasmaa said in his book *The Eyes Of The Skin*:

“Atmospheric characteristics of spaces, places and settings are grasped before any conscious observation of details is made. Despite the obvious importance of atmospheric perception, it has hardly been introduced in architectural discourse.

Again, neurological investigations suggest that our processes of perception and cognition advance from the instantaneous grasp of entities towards the identification of details, rather than the other way round.”

“Architecture and psychology are converging, with a growing emphasis on how light, acoustics, texture and spatial flow influence emotional response”

Client expectations have evolved beyond aesthetics and functionality to embrace restorative living, from domestic spas, gyms and yoga spaces to hospitality concepts centred on organic, farm-to-table nourishment. Meanwhile, commercial fitness and wellness environments are expected to deliver more than performance alone, combining cultural relevance, community and design excellence.

A more informed understanding of the body is also reshaping spatial priorities. Strength-based movement, mobility training, contrast therapy and breathwork are informing environments designed not only for activity, but also for recovery and long-term resilience. Beyond this, we now better understand how our environment – including natural light, air quality and materials – affects our wellbeing. This signals a broader transition from fitness to holistic wellbeing, where physical and mental health are recognised as intrinsically connected.

As the market becomes increasingly design-literate, expectations continue to rise. Spaces dedicated to wellbeing must demonstrate the same level of refinement, material intelligence and sensory awareness as any other interior typology. Architecture and psychology are converging, with a growing emphasis on how light, acoustics, texture and spatial flow influence emotional response. The most successful environments balance technical performance with atmosphere, recognising that home is as much a feeling as it is a physical structure.

In this first compendium, we draw on our work to identify the emerging patterns that influence the next phase of design for wellbeing. We consider how environments are evolving to support healthier, more thoughtful and more considered ways of living.



COTSWOLD COTTAGE





PRIMROSE HILL TERRACE



The Architecture of Slowness



A growing emphasis on slowness is reshaping how homes are conceived and experienced. Residential environments are increasingly designed as holistic settings that support physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, reinforcing the role of the home as a place to restore energy, recalibrate daily rhythms and cultivate healthier routines.

Rather than appearing as add-ons, wellness elements are most effective when seamlessly integrated into the architectural language of the home, maintaining both clarity of function and a calm, restorative atmosphere. Across our current portfolio, approximately 50% of homes now incorporate dedicated wellness spaces, whether saunas, steam rooms, swimming pools or flexible fitness studios designed for strength training, yoga or mobility work.

These spaces are designed with longevity in mind. Fitness environments in particular are designed with a degree of spatial looseness, which allows them to adapt as equipment evolves and personal routines change over time. Architecture is moving away from highly prescribed layouts towards flexible environments that support evolving definitions of health.

In the UK, we are currently developing a pool house for a riverside property that expands the traditional concept into a broader therapeutic setting. Alongside the main pool, we are integrating a steam room, sauna and dedicated cold shower, enabling contrast therapy within a domestic environment and reflecting a more sophisticated understanding of recovery and resilience. The use of materials is very specific, with natural plasters and stones used in the main pool area while the wellness zone features travertine, curved corners and discreet lighting. The environment itself promotes

calm and relaxation before one even uses any of the wellness facilities.

Similarly, we have recently completed one of central London's largest private indoor swimming pools, which is 25m in length. Unusually positioned at ground level rather than in the basement, the pool maintains a direct relationship with the garden and sky, reinforcing the client's belief that connection to natural light and landscape plays a vital role in supporting both physical and mental health.

Importantly, the integration of wellness is no longer limited to large-scale properties. We are seeing increasing demand for gyms, saunas and restorative spaces within more modest homes, reflecting a broader reprioritisation of domestic life. Space is increasingly allocated not to purely representational functions, but to those that support longevity, balance and everyday wellbeing.

Slowness, once considered a luxury, is becoming a design principle.



OF THE RISE



SPACES THIRD

Alongside the growing emphasis on wellbeing, we are seeing the continued emergence of “third spaces”, environments designed for social connection, conversation and restoration that extend beyond traditional definitions of fitness, retail or workplace typologies.

Approximately 20% of our commercial projects now incorporate a third-space component, signalling a shift away from purely functional environments towards those that deliver meaning, identity and community.

These spaces reflect a more holistic understanding of wellbeing, recognising that social interaction, mental clarity and emotional comfort are as important as physical health. Increasingly, design is being used to create settings that encourage people to pause, engage and recharge within uplifting, human-centred environments.

Across hospitality, retail and workplace sectors, businesses are responding to changing expectations around health, comfort and experience. Fitness studios increasingly incorporate cafés and informal gathering spaces. Retail environments are evolving into concept-led destinations designed for engagement rather than transaction. Listening bars, communal spa environments and farm-to-table

hospitality concepts are emerging as hybrid typologies that blur traditional categories of leisure, wellness and culture.

We are also observing the evolution of members’ clubs that place wellbeing and social interaction at their core, combining spaces for fitness and recovery with environments designed for gathering and exchange. What began as small café additions within studios has developed into more comprehensive ecosystems centred on community.

For our ongoing work with Reform Athletica, the architectural approach reflects an understanding that different spatial atmospheres support different mental states. Social spaces are conceived as warm and welcoming, expressing openness and hospitality, while the transition deeper into the studio introduces a shift in tone, creating quieter, more introspective environments that encourage mental reset and focus.

Third spaces represent a fundamental recalibration in how environments are valued: they are no longer defined solely by efficiency or performance, but by their capacity to support connection, belonging and shared experience. Community is becoming an architectural programme.



REFORM ATHLETICA, RIYADH



SENSORY LIFE:

Preventative Health Architecture



PRIMROSE HILL TERRACE

As awareness of mental health and longevity continues to shape the built environment, architecture is increasingly understood not only as a visual discipline, but as a physiological one. Designers are moving beyond composition and aesthetics alone towards a more holistic understanding of how spaces sound, feel, breathe and perform over time. The environments we inhabit influence stress levels, sleep quality, cognitive clarity and physical health in ways that are both measurable and deeply intuitive.

This shift signals a broader move towards preventative health architecture, where homes are designed not simply for comfort, but to actively support long-term wellbeing. Increasingly, spatial planning, environmental performance and sensory cues are being considered as part of a wider strategy to reduce cognitive load, improve air quality and promote healthier daily rhythms.

Thoughtful design decisions, from acoustics and ventilation to light quality, material tactility and spatial rhythm, can measurably improve mood, productivity and overall comfort. Clients are showing growing interest in air purification strategies, low-toxicity material specifications and layouts that encourage natural movement throughout the home. Circulation is being reconsidered not simply as a functional requirement, but as an opportunity to support physical activity through daily routines. Small shifts in spatial organisation can subtly encourage more movement, reinforcing the idea that design can contribute to health more subtly, without requiring behavioural change.



Environmental performance plays a central role in this approach. Carefully designed ventilation strategies improve air quality and reduce exposure to pollutants, while thermal mass materials stabilise internal temperatures, creating more consistent and comfortable environments throughout the seasons. In a recently completed project in west London, we introduced large operable skylights and a central staircase to create passive stack-effect ventilation, allowing the home to regulate airflow naturally. These time-tested principles demonstrate how historic architectural intelligence can respond directly to contemporary concerns around health, sustainability and resilience.

Designing for the senses also involves the careful orchestration of sound, light and tactility. Acoustic insulation strategies reduce ambient noise by separating active and quiet environments, ensuring that spaces for rest and concentration remain protected from disruption. Underfloor heating provides consistent radiant warmth without abrupt fluctuations in temperature, supporting physical comfort while maintaining visual calm. Indoor planting introduces sensory diversity through colour, scent and connection to nature, while repetition of materials across different areas of the home creates visual continuity and spatial legibility.

Sleep is emerging as one of the most measurable ways architecture can influence wellbeing. In *Why We Sleep*, neuroscientist Matthew Walker observes that if there was a drug that could improve memory, stabilise mood, strengthen immunity and reduce the risk of serious illness, it would be considered transformative. That intervention already exists in the form of sleep, yet its effectiveness is closely tied to the quality of the environment in which it occurs.



HIGHGATE HOUSE



HIGHGATE HOUSE



“As our understanding of the relationship between environment and health continues to deepen, sensory intelligence is becoming a defining characteristic of quality design”

Light plays a defining role in regulating circadian rhythm. Homes designed to maximise natural daylight in living areas support alertness and cognitive clarity, while layered lighting strategies in the evening reduce blue light exposure and prepare the body for rest. Automated blinds and blackout systems ensure true darkness, which supports deeper sleep cycles and more consistent recovery.

Sound is equally critical. Even low levels of irregular noise can fragment deep sleep, making carefully specified insulation strategies essential. Thermal comfort also plays a key role, as bodies require a slight reduction in temperature to initiate sleep. Precisely calibrated ventilation, heating and insulation systems allow environments to maintain stability throughout the night, supporting uninterrupted rest.

Aesthetic calm contributes to a final layer of preventative design. Integrated storage reduces visual

noise, tactile materials soften sound and light, and cohesive colour palettes create environments that feel ordered and restorative. When spaces feel calm and intentional, the nervous system responds accordingly.

Increasingly, homes are being designed to support a healthy lifestyle through subtle yet meaningful design interventions. Sensory design therefore extends beyond atmosphere into measurable health impact, demonstrating that architecture can play a quiet but significant role in supporting long-term wellbeing.

As our understanding of the relationship between environment and health continues to deepen, sensory intelligence is becoming a defining characteristic of quality design. When architecture aligns with human biology, healthier routines often emerge naturally, reinforcing the idea that wellbeing is not only influenced by how we live, but by where we live.



Emotional



Zoning

The great architect Peter Zumthor said in his book *Thinking Architecture*, 'there is an intimate relationship between our emotions and the things around us'. As our understanding of wellbeing becomes more nuanced, architecture is increasingly being used to support different emotional and cognitive states throughout the day. Rather than designing homes as singular environments with a consistent atmosphere, we are seeing a shift towards emotional zoning, where the careful calibration of spatial characteristics supporting focus, restoration, social connection and introspection are provided within one setting.

Scientific research continues to reinforce the relationship between environment and health outcomes. Studies in healthcare environments have shown that patients in bright, naturally lit rooms recover faster than those in darker settings, requiring fewer painkillers, reporting lower stress levels and experiencing shorter hospital stays. Even indirect exposure to nature, such as views of greenery or the sound of birdsong, has been shown to measurably improve wellbeing. These findings suggest that architecture is not simply a backdrop to daily life, but an active contributor to physiological and psychological health.



HACKNEY HOUSE

If light and nature can behave like medicine, the wider environment may also be quietly shaping our habits, behaviours and emotional responses.

Behavioural research increasingly supports this idea. In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear argues that behaviour is largely determined by context. His framework for behaviour change – making actions obvious, attractive, easy and satisfying – reinforces the idea that spatial cues influence daily routines more powerfully than intention alone. Where we perform activities matters. The kitchen counter becomes associated with morning rituals. A comfortable chair by a window encourages reading. A well-proportioned dining space supports shared meals. Over time, environments condition behaviours, shaping how we move, rest and interact.

Designing a home, therefore, is also an exercise in shaping behavioural patterns as much as creating aesthetic cohesion. Thoughtfully considered lighting can make reading more appealing than screen use. A clearly defined workspace can encourage focus,

while a calm bedroom environment signals retreat and mental quiet. Architecture becomes a framework for habit formation, subtly guiding occupants towards healthier rhythms without conscious effort.

We are increasingly designing homes as sequences of atmospheres, where transitions in light quality, ceiling height, material texture and spatial proportion support different emotional states. Spaces for gathering tend to feel open and inviting, while areas intended for concentration or recovery benefit from quieter acoustics, softer textures and more controlled light levels. Even subtle shifts in layout or threshold can help the mind register a change in pace.

This approach reflects a broader movement away from uniform open-plan environments towards homes that offer variation and choice. Carefully positioned reading corners, window seats, alcoves and informal breakout spaces create opportunities for retreat without requiring additional square footage. These moments of intimacy support mental rest and provide alternatives to constant digital stimulation.

“Architecture becomes a framework for habit formation, subtly guiding occupants towards healthier rhythms without conscious effort”



OF THE EARTH, DUBAI

Philosophies such as wabi-sabi further reinforce the value of modest, everyday rituals as a foundation for wellbeing. When architecture elevates small acts such as making tea, reading near natural light, listening to music, or simply observing seasonal change through a window it encourages attentiveness and presence. These repeated moments of quiet engagement can become forms of everyday mindfulness, supporting mental clarity and emotional balance.

Designing for emotional zoning does not require dramatic gestures. It often emerges through the careful orchestration of spatial relationships, natural light and material consistency. Repetition of forms and textures can create a sense of continuity, while variation in scale and enclosure allows occupants to intuitively select the environment best suited to their needs at a given moment.

As homes increasingly accommodate work, leisure, exercise and rest within a single environment, the ability to support multiple mental states becomes essential. Emotional zoning recognises that wellbeing is not only supported through dedicated wellness spaces, but through the everyday choreography of domestic life.

When architecture aligns with human psychology, environments can gently encourage healthier routines, deeper focus and more restorative forms of rest. In this sense, design does not simply house behaviour, it helps shape it.



CALM

As digital systems become more embedded in our daily lives, there is a growing desire for homes that feel calmer, quieter and less visibly technological. Increasingly, the most sophisticated environments are those where technology recedes into the background, supporting wellbeing without demanding attention. Rather than celebrating visible innovation, design is moving towards calm technology, spaces that feel intuitive, unobtrusive and emotionally reassuring, while quietly delivering high levels of environmental performance.

TECH

Technology is no longer experienced as a separate layer applied to architecture. Instead, it is becoming part of the building's invisible infrastructure, integrated seamlessly into lighting, ventilation, acoustics and spatial control. The goal is not to create homes that feel overtly "smart", but homes that feel effortlessly comfortable. When systems operate quietly and predictably, they reduce cognitive load and allow occupants to focus on living rather than managing their environment.

Circadian lighting systems are a clear example of this shift. Rather than relying on manual adjustment, lighting can gradually shift in tone and intensity throughout the day, supporting natural rhythms of alertness and rest. Cooler light in the morning supports concentration and productivity, while warmer tones in the evening signal to the body to slow down. These subtle adjustments align the interior environment with the biological expectations of the human body, supporting sleep quality and long-term health without requiring conscious effort.

Air quality is another area where invisible performance is becoming increasingly important. As awareness grows around pollution and airborne toxins, clients are seeking environments that actively support respiratory health. Integrated filtration systems, passive ventilation strategies and low-toxicity material selections contribute to healthier indoor environments, often without being visible. Similarly, advancements in acoustic engineering allow spaces to maintain calm and privacy even within dense urban conditions.

The most successful technological interventions are often those that are least apparent. Concealed speakers, discreet sensors, integrated controls and automated shading systems allow architecture to remain visually calm while delivering a highly responsive environment. Interfaces are simplified, and in many cases removed entirely, reducing the need for multiple devices or visible hardware. Technology becomes ambient rather than performative.





“Architecture that feels timeless in character, yet current in performance”

This approach reflects a broader cultural fatigue with constant digital stimulation. As screens and notifications increasingly dominate attention, homes are being designed as places where technology supports life without competing for focus. The emphasis shifts from interaction to intuition, allowing environments to adapt quietly in response to changing conditions throughout the day.

Calm technology also supports the growing desire for longevity and adaptability in residential design. Flexible infrastructure allows homes to evolve as technologies advance, ensuring systems remain relevant without requiring significant spatial alteration. The result is architecture that feels timeless in character, yet current in performance.

In this context, intelligence is measured not by visibility, but by sensitivity. The most advanced homes are those that anticipate needs, support wellbeing and enhance comfort without announcing themselves. When technology disappears into the background, architecture is able to foreground what matters most: light, space, material and atmosphere.

Future smart homes may be those that feel the least technological of all.



01.

Wellbeing is now the primary driver of design

Wellness has evolved from a desirable feature into a fundamental design principle. Clients increasingly expect environments to support physical health, mental clarity and longevity, rather than simply provide visual appeal or functional efficiency. Architecture and psychology are converging, with growing recognition that light, air quality, acoustics and spatial organisation influence sleep, mood, productivity and overall quality of life. Design is increasingly understood as an environmental determinant of health.

02.

Homes are becoming preventative health environments

Residential design is shifting from reactive comfort to proactive wellbeing. Approximately 50% of the homes we are currently designing incorporate dedicated wellness spaces, but the broader shift extends beyond gyms and spas. Clients are placing greater emphasis on natural ventilation, low-toxicity materials, movement-promoting layouts and circadian lighting strategies. Architecture is increasingly expected to support long-term resilience, reflecting a growing awareness that the home plays a measurable role in supporting physical and mental health.

03.

Slowness is emerging as a spatial strategy

Homes are increasingly designed to support restorative routines and healthier daily rhythms. Flexible fitness spaces, contrast-therapy environments and quiet retreat areas reflect a broader move towards environments that encourage balance and recovery as much as performance. Spaces are becoming more adaptable, allowing occupants to evolve their habits over time. Architecture is shifting away from prescriptive layouts towards environments that support longevity through flexibility, comfort and ease of use.

04.

Third spaces are redefining commercial design

Social wellbeing is becoming an essential component of spatial experience. Approximately 20% of our commercial projects now incorporate third-space elements, reflecting the growing importance of environments designed for connection, conversation and shared experience. Hybrid typologies such as fitness studios with cafés, members' clubs centred on wellbeing and retail environments designed for engagement demonstrate how businesses are responding to evolving expectations around community and belonging. Social connection is increasingly recognised as a core component of holistic health.

05.

Sensory design is becoming a new measure of quality

The most progressive environments are designed not only for how they look, but for how they feel, sound and perform. Increasingly, sensory intelligence is seen as a marker of design quality, encompassing passive ventilation, acoustic integrity, tactile materiality and carefully calibrated lighting. As awareness of the relationship between environment and wellbeing deepens, sensory-led design is moving from luxury to baseline expectation. The most successful spaces align with human biology, supporting healthier routines intuitively and effortlessly.

Wellbeing is rapidly becoming a primary driver of architectural design. Across our current portfolio, 50% of homes now incorporate dedicated wellness spaces, reflecting a shift from reactive comfort to preventative health environments that support longevity, recovery and everyday balance. At the same time, 20% of our commercial projects now include third spaces, signalling growing demand for environments that foster social connection, community and emotional wellbeing alongside performance.

Projects increasingly demonstrate how architecture can directly influence behaviour. Spatial design can subtly shape routines by making healthier actions more intuitive and appealing. Sleep is emerging as a measurable design parameter, with light quality, acoustics and thermal comfort influencing cognitive clarity, mood and resilience.

Technology is becoming less visible but more impactful, with calm, integrated systems that support air quality, lighting rhythms and environmental stability. From a 25m ground-floor pool connected to nature to homes designed around restorative routines using technology that is less visible, architecture is evolving to support healthier ways of living.



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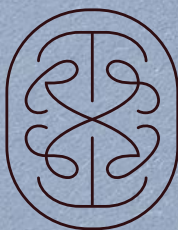
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Rooted in over 25 years of architectural expertise, TR Studio
creates beautiful spaces for clients around the world.

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