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# Multigenerational London home design prioritises social and environmental sustainability

Sarah Wigglesworth Architects creates a Passivhaus home in north London that puts social and environmental sustainability at its heart

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**E**ngulfed in a wild, leafy garden, a new multigenerational home in north London is designed to be functional and inclusive. Haycroft Gardens, created by architect Sarah Wigglesworth and her team, may appear humble, but it takes sustainable architecture to the next level.

Commissioned to work on an infill site in Kensal Green, Wigglesworth was invited to create a single-level, three-bedroom home that would accommodate the needs of a young family and an elderly parent within the same domestic scheme. 'The long-term requirements of the occupants, such as mutual support, accessibility, comfort, energy use and adaptability', were crucial in the design solution, explains the architect.



In terms of environmental sustainability, the project was built according to Passivhaus principles. A specialist timber frame manufacturer was involved, while an air-source heat pump and MVHR (mechanical ventilation with heat recovery) provide heating and ventilation respectively. The aim was for the house to have a very low energy usage.

The site was once occupied by a dairy farm, and the project's 'masterplan' references that function, through its composition of low, smaller volumes – just like a selection of agricultural outbuildings would be arranged. A greenhouse, with a pergola, is the only piece of the original complex that is still on site, and was preserved and incorporated to flag up the plot's past and provide a sense of continuity.

The home's plan takes an L-shaped form, with the lush garden at its centre. An open-plan kitchen/dining/living area is just off that and opens up towards the greenery through floor-to-ceiling glazing. The entrance to the plot occupies its own, independent cedar-wood structure, set on the side of a period property that faces the street – allowing privacy but also a sense of intrigue as to what could be behind this simple gatehouse.