

London House Wrapped in Cork

Energy-efficient renovation using expanded cork insulation as an external finish.



Project overview

This south Tottenham home was renovated to improve energy efficiency rather than increase its floor area. The existing 1970s property was transformed into a fossil-fuel-free family home, with the renovation focused on reducing energy demand and using lower-impact materials.

Expanded cork was selected for the exterior because it combines insulation with a distinctive natural finish. The project also used natural and recycled materials internally, including sheep wool, wood fibre, recycled plastic fleece and cork granules.

Why expanded cork?

Expanded cork boards are made from cork granules that are heated and pressed into panels. During manufacture, the cork's naturally occurring suberin binds the granules together, so no added binder is required. For this project, the material was chosen for its insulating properties, sustainability and appearance.



The renovated interior forms part of the wider low-energy approach.

Low-energy strategy

The gas supply was removed and an air-source heat pump installed. Downstairs radiators were replaced with underfloor heating to improve heat-pump efficiency. The project demonstrates how a renovation can prioritise the performance of the existing building rather than adding more space.

Natural material expression

The exposed cork gives the house a textured exterior that makes the insulation part of the architecture rather than hiding it behind another finish. The material has also become a talking point, helping raise awareness of cork and lower-impact approaches to building renovation.

