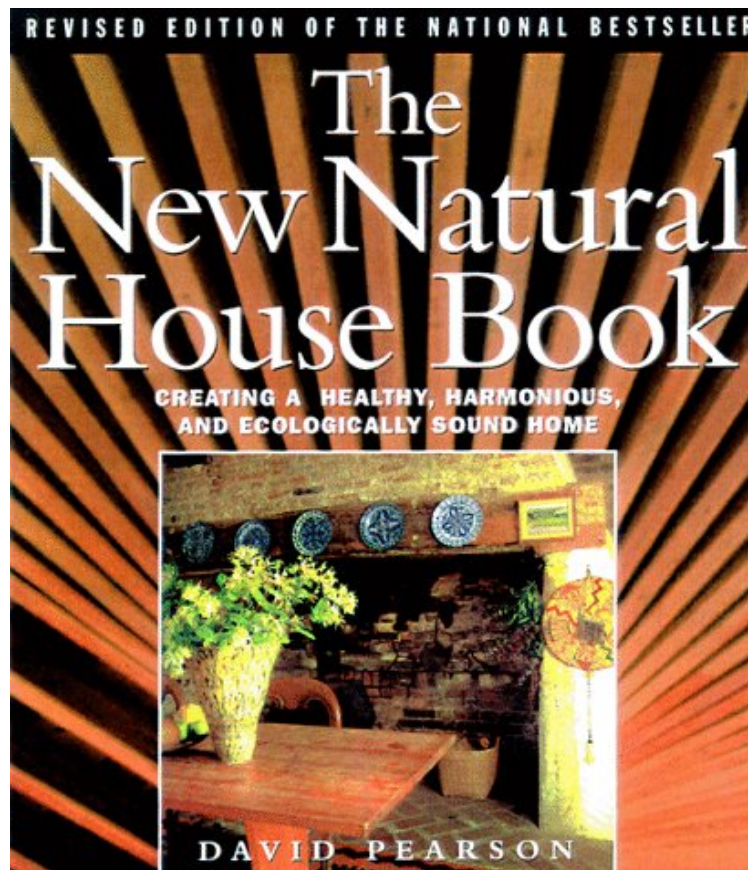


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## The New Natural House Book: Creating a Healthy, Harmonious, and Ecologically Sound Home

David Pearson

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timely then when it was written. The book gives an overview of how various decisions in home building and daily living affect humans health--physical, mental, and spiritually, and how those choices affect the earth itself. This is a major undertaking for 300 pages, but the author actually does a good job of touching on most of the choices--choices that are as important to day as 15 years ago, and 15 years from now. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful Book! By adventurebabblerr Great book full of a broad array of green building options. Loved it and will have to buy it again (lent it to a friend who moved). This book inspired me!

This completely revised and redesigned edition of the bestselling Natural House Book brings you hundreds of practical energy- and money-saving ideas to enhance your home, your environment, and your well-being. Originally published in 1989, The Natural House Book anticipated our problems with garbage disposal, indoor air pollution, water purification, and environmental hazards. Today more than ever, we need inspiration and cutting-edge information to transform our homes into havens for the body, mind, and spirit. Lavishly illustrated with more than 100 full-color photos, combining the expertise of top architects, designers, and ecology authorities from all over the world, here is a hands-on, step-by-step, room-by-room architectural and design guide to bring you and your family safely and happily into the twenty-first century. You'll find out how to: Use the latest toxin-free materials Improve air and water quality Save energy Minimize maintenance Create green space Combat environmental hazards Incorporate aromatherapy and feng shui Design a personal space for contemplation Build an exercise room Use color, texture, and design to create a nourishing, stress-free environment for your family Featuring a new Gaia House prototype design, a new Charter for Natural Building, and completely updated appendices on natural paints and varnishes, household cleaners, and indoor air pollution, as well as a mail-order resource list for furniture, carpeting, water filtration, and textiles, The New Natural House Book will help you create a better future.

.com The Natural House Book, first published in 1989, originated the phrase "natural house" and established the presence of the Green movement in home design. Author David Pearson has updated and expanded this eco-aware homebuilder's classic with new resource listings, a new photo-essay in the introduction, and revised text describing the latest and best developments in natural construction. The first part of the book deals with the interaction between the home and the external environment, the second part with the home's components, and the third part with the design of the living space itself. Throughout the book, well-drawn illustrations and numerous photographs show how enlightened home design makes Green living easier by encouraging builders and residents to take advantage of natural light and heat. They're also a powerful tool for convincing those who might not yet be committed to natural living, as many of the homes are luxurious and warm looking. (The natural bathrooms are so beautiful and comfortable, one can only wonder why anyone settles for the prefab "luxury master baths" that the construction industry pushes on new homebuilders.) It's truly a book that takes a larger view, appealing not only to those with fewer resources who have always wanted to live simply, but also to those who can afford to live where they want, in effect saying to them, "Our way is better--for the environment and for you." About the Author David Pearson DIP ARCH (HONS) MCRP, RIBA, is an architect and planner who has been actively involved in inner city and new community housing for most of his working life in Britain and the USA. Since the 1980s he has been active in the fields of ecological design and Gaia philosophy (inspired by the view of the Earth as a living organism). With degrees from both the University of London and the University of California, Berkeley, he works, lectures, and travels widely. David Pearson is Founder and Chair of the Trustees of the Ecological Design Association, an educational charity, and Editor of Eco-Design, the Association's journal. As Managing Director of Gaia Environments Ltd, he has been architectural consultant on a range of exciting projects. He is also a Founder Member of Gaia International, an innovative group of international eco-architects who collaborate in competitions and architectural events. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter One THE NATURAL HOUSE "There is one timeless way of building. It is thousands of years old, and the same today as it always has been." Christopher Alexander, The Timeless Way of Building. Health for the body, peace for the spirit, harmony with the environment -- these are the criteria of the natural house. All three have deep roots in the human experience and in the ethnic traditions of home building in cultures across the world -- the "timeless way". But in the last two centuries the Western tradition has turned aside from such understanding and respect for the criteria of the natural home has moved to the fringes -- to the alternative health, environment, and holistic "New Age" groups. The pioneers of natural architecture have been many -- from Frank Lloyd Wright to the Japanese, from Baubiologie in Germany, appropriate technology in Wales, and earth-sheltered homes in Australia to biospheres in the USA. More and more, the strands of health, ecology, and spirit are coming together -- the new architecture is alive and well. Ideas and technologies that seemed revolutionary a few years ago are more widespread and natural products more available. Great areas of the planet were once covered by forests rich with a profusion of plants, birds, and animals. Our ancestors, few in number, roamed at will feeding on anything to hand and moving on as the seasons changed and animals migrated. From archaeological evidence, and from contact with surviving remote peoples, it is becoming evident that these cultures were far from primitive. They were (and, where they still survive, are) as sophisticated in many ways as modern urban society. They accumulated over generations a very detailed and

intimate knowledge of everything around them -- climate, seasons, animals, and plants. Their lives may have been more insecure, but they enjoyed more freedom and an intimate relationship with a world still untouched and beautiful. Home to these first peoples was their whole territory and spiritual landscape. Caves, trees, grass shelters, and hide tents provided natural and traditional temporary campsites for different seasons. By the millennial clock of our existence, it is only in the last minute of the eleventh hour that we have changed our primordial living patterns and started to build permanent homes and settlements. Indeed some archeologists now think that the life of the early hunter-gatherers was not willingly exchanged for the relative security of settled agriculturalism, but only under pressure of increasing population and decreasing wild resources. The change meant the gradual loss of that deep spiritual contact with all their fellow species, the earth, and the heavens. In their dreamtime walkabouts, Australian Aborigines still seek this today as they follow ancestral spirit paths to sacred sites. Nonetheless, the earliest settlements and much indigenous architecture throughout history since, continued to express a close link with nature. Everywhere across the world there are diverse and ingenious types of ethnic housing, built from local materials that sit comfortably in the landscape, and respond well to local climate. They follow generic vernacular types that have taken thousands of years of trial and error to perfect. There is a danger that when we look at houses of primitive or unfamiliar cultures we misinterpret what we see. As Enrico Guidoni stresses in his book *Primitive Architecture*, there is a tendency to overemphasize the influence of local climate and materials and to underestimate the importance of the social, cultural, and spiritual context. Not all ethnic houses are appropriate to their climate nor do local people, even when given sufficient natural resources and space, automatically make the best use of their materials. The houses of the Masai people of East Africa, for example, are too low to stand upright in and smoke from cooking fires fills the inside. Nevertheless, most ethnic homes around the world manage both to integrate spiritual and physical needs and to be in harmony with the local environment. Early city builders may have understood better than we do the principles of natural ecology. The Greeks appreciated the benefits of the sun and even treated equal access to sunlight as a legal right. They planned the city of Olynthus in the 5th century BC with streets oriented so they all received equal sun. In the New World, Pueblo Bonito showed as great a sophistication. The terraced "sky city" of the Acoma Indians near Albuquerque constructed on a sheltered mesa also ensured the "sun rights" of all houses, even when the sun was at its lowest in winter. Thick adobe walls absorbed the heat of the day and released it at night while straw and adobe roofs gave insulation against the hot summer sun. Concern for healthy housing has a long history, too. Evidence from ancient cities, such as those built by the Sumerians, or in the Indus Valley, and by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, indicates a developed and sometimes sophisticated understanding of health and comfort. Piped water and cisterns, hypocaust underfloor heating, hot baths, and steam rooms, toilets and sewers, courtyards cooled with pools and fountains, and herb gardens all existed. Most of this earlier knowledge was lost in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. But in many other cultures it remained a continuing tradition, from thermal baths in Japan to the sweat lodges of the native Americans. Today, many agencies in developing countries are seeking to draw on the rich heritage of ethnic building and combine it with modern appropriate technology to provide self-build (owner-builder) housing. And it is often to the ethnic tradition that modern natural architecture turns for its inspiration in seeking new solutions to old problems -- of climate, health, and the sense of home.

The Western tradition In the 18th century, the vernacular, craft-based traditions in Europe were first disturbed by the Agrarian Revolution. Large land enclosures and rich landlords displaced indigenous communities, and imported foreign styles and materials were introduced for manor houses and merchant city homes. Homes and towns still, however, retained much of their former grace and maintained their integrity with the local landscape and climate. The American settlers developed new building traditions in response to the conditions in their adopted land. New England "saltbox" houses were built with their high side to catch the sun and the low, sloping roof at the back turned to the prevailing winter winds. The ovens and fireplaces termed a central core to heat the surrounding rooms efficiently, and some rooms were closed off in winter. In summer, a pergola hung with vines shaded the sunny side from excessive heat. In the hot and humid Southern states, great ingenuity was used to cool homes with cross-ventilation. Open as well as shuttered verandahs and passages cooled the classic plantation mansions while a straight-through corridor served to ventilate the humble "dogtrot" house. In the drier Southwest and Mexico, the Spanish adapted their Mediterranean heritage to the hacienda, ranch, adobe house, and to the city square, or *zocalo*. It was the Industrial Revolution that finally ended the thousands of years of the "timeless way". More than the mechanization it brought, it was the new world view that was to change our direction so completely. The Industrial Age ushered in a belief in mastery of nature by science and machines, and a change to a mass society. In terms of the home, the consequences were a move away from the individually craft-built houses in villages or small towns to uniform and anonymous urban dwellings close-packed around the factory, mill, or mine and, later, radiating outward from the city centre in great bands of suburbs. People were no longer involved in shaping or understanding, their own role in the