



## GO BACK TO BASICS

Mark Waghorn at Mark Waghorn Design (mwd.wales) describe the benefits of building with natural materials

- Any product derived from plants - such as straw, timber or hemp - will have sequestered carbon from the air as it has grown. If it's been sourced locally and hasn't undergone major changes in its conversion for use in construction, the environmental impact of using it as part of a building is minimal.
- Other benefits are harder to measure, but no less important. We provided design services

for the build of a straw bale house, so I have experienced these benefits first-hand. Natural materials are simply a joy to work with.

- Organically derived products are vapour-permeable and allow the building to breathe. Conversely, many modern synthetics such as foam insulation, paints and plastic membranes create an impermeable barrier to water. This can be practical, but when

the whole building is impermeably sealed, problems with trapped moisture can arise. With natural products such as lime plaster, moisture passes through the fabric of the building so it can evaporate from external surfaces. This reduces the health risks of mould derived from damp.

- Natural materials can be disposed of in an eco-friendly way, by burning or composting, or made use of in another form.