



The Life House, Wales

Designed by John Pawson · A space for calm and reflection



Internationally acclaimed RIBA award-winning architectural designer John Pawson, creator of the new home of the Design Museum which opens in November 2016, has been commissioned by Living Architecture to create The Life House. The retreat is in a peaceful Welsh Valley, conceived as a space for calm and reflection.

Living Architecture commissions leading architects to design houses that are available for the public to rent for holidays and weekends. Past commissions include FAT Architecture and Grayson Perry's A House for Essex. The Life House is the seventh property, and the first in Wales.

The design of the house, which sleeps six people, is based upon the concept of a retreat where serenity, contemplation and restoration are foremost; a place where a week-long stay will immerse the visitor in a zone of extreme calm and leave them revived and re-invigorated to resume their responsibilities in the world.

Guests will be provided with a book produced by John Pawson and Living

Architecture on how to go about fundamental everyday rituals whilst enjoying the solitude of The Life House. Included are chapters on conversation and bathing, as well as suggested recipes to cook and music to listen to during the stay.

The building where the retreat unfolds is both simple yet luxurious. It is the result of five years of work by John Pawson, working in conjunction with the philosopher Alain de Botton, and has been deeply influenced by Japanese design and the architecture of the Benedictine monks. The design draws on a variety of ingredients of calm:

- a contemplation chamber buried into the hillside where one is invited to lie down in a blank cavernous zone and purify and train the mind on true essentials.
- an outside contemplation zone enabling the user to repeat the exercise with the Welsh hills as a backdrop.
- a generous living area, large bathrooms, bedrooms, cupboards and common areas allow for both

complete privacy and – when it's desired – sociability and communion.

- a library bedroom, lined with some of the most therapeutic works of eastern and western literature
- a music bedroom, with a suitably powerful music system and a carefully curated selection of transcendent and calming music from all ages and genres.
- a bathing bedroom which provides a room-based bathing platform in which to lie and reassess existence with the help of views onto a Welsh valley
- the house is placed at the nexus of a sequence of walks curated by the artist Hamish Fulton, so that at certain points during the stay, you can invigorate the body in order further to soothe the mind.

The rural retreat has been constructed from over 80,000 handmade Danish bricks. The combination of light and dark-coloured bricks, pale polished concrete floors and Douglas fir timber ceilings, doors and furniture creates an atmosphere of quiet reflection, ideal for escaping the demands of modern life.



The Life House, Wales



Creative Director of Living Architecture
Alain De Botton said:

"With The Life House, we were looking to reinvent the monastery for a secular modern age; based upon the concept of a retreat; to take us back to the earliest days of Buddhism in the East, and of Stoic philosophy in the West. In both cases, the busy city was held to provide certain opportunities while at the same time, cutting us off from others. Chiefly, the risk is that we will forget to make time for ourselves, and omit to understand our own minds – and our need for calm and perspective."

John Pawson, designer of The Life House, said:

"It has been a pleasure to work with the Living Architecture team on a totally new type of project for me. In this house I wanted to create a modern, secular retreat, where guests can experience the benefits of introspection, solitude and immersion in nature. The location is wonderfully remote and I wanted to create a sanctuary where people feel at home, but never insulated from the elemental character of the surrounding landscape."

Rental prices for The Life House start from £1600 per week (7 nights).

Booking enquiries can be made at
www.living-architecture.co.uk



Living Architecture

Holidays in modern architecture

PRESS RELEASE | November 2016



The Life House, Wales

NOTES TO EDITORS

About John Pawson

John Pawson was born in 1949 in Halifax, Yorkshire, establishing his practice in London in 1981. His diverse body of work includes Calvin Klein's first flagship store in New York, the Cistercian monastery of Nový Dvůr in the Czech Republic, the Sackler Crossing at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and ballet sets for the Royal Opera House in London and the Opera Bastille in Paris. He is currently involved in the project to create a new permanent home for the Design Museum in London, scheduled to open later this year.

Selected awards:

- Blueprint Architect of the Year (2005)
- RSA Royal Designer for Industry (2005)
- Wallpaper* House of the Year (2006)
- Stephen Lawrence Prize (2008)
- Fondazione Frate Sole International Prize for Sacred Architecture (2008)
- RIBA National Award (2008)
- RIBA Arts & Leisure Regional Award (2008)
- RIBA London Special Award (2008)
- German Design Council Interior Designer of the Year (2014)

About Living Architecture

Living Architecture was created to change public perceptions of modern architecture. By commissioning world-class architects to design houses, which can then be rented by the public over a period of days and nights, it aims to promote, educate and influence discussion about modern architecture.

Living Architecture houses are available to rent for holidays or weekends:

- The Balancing Barn, Suffolk – by MVRDV (sleeps 8)
- The Dune House, Suffolk – by Jarmund/Vigsnæs Architects (sleeps 9)
- The Long House, Norfolk – by Michael Hopkins (sleeps 10)
- The Shingle House, Kent – by Nord Architecture (sleeps 8)
- A Room for London, Southbank – by David Kohn Architects and Fiona Banner (sleeps 2)
- A House for Essex – by FAT architecture with artist Grayson Perry (sleeps 4)

PRESS INFORMATION / PICTURES

For downloadable images please see www.living-architecture.co.uk/press

For further information contact press@living-architecture.co.uk

