

Spaces that work well

As occupiers and investors increasingly seek properties designed to boost the wellbeing of staff and residents, **Daniel Fryer** looks at how developers are rising to the challenge of creating healthier buildings

Wellbeing is a term that isn't going away. It is being built into the very fabric of modern office and mixed-use developments as architects and developers make wellness instrumental like never before, with most aiming for all-important accreditations such as WELL certification and more.

But while most developers are focused on achieving those standards, some take a broader view of wellness-enhancing projects. "We started by saying 'let's not think about certificates and those standards; let's think about how we deliver the best that we can'," says Alexander Morris, development director at investor BGO, whose schemes include 105 Victoria Street in London Victoria. The mixed-use project includes 450,000 sq ft of workspace, green space, terracing, an

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Alexander Morris, BGO

urban farm and community allotments. Instead of bringing on board specialists, Morris says BGO created separate teams to come up with answers. "No one could present anything to me unless it had been through a team and a cycle of review," says Morris. "We had everyone incredibly focused on finding those right answers, the net result being that we achieved every standard you could think of. But our goal wasn't to tick boxes; it was to deliver the best we could in that environment."

Due for completion in 2026, 105 Victoria Street will feature a 200m 'walk-and-talk' track to encourage active working, an activity zone, extensive cycle storage and a cycle ramp.

Then there are the community allotments, which aren't just about physical health but also mental health, says Morris. "Maybe you live in a flat or haven't got any outside space – well, then you can come here. Not only do you get great views, but you also get to plant things, care for them and watch them grow."

To help ensure good air quality, the building has a floor-by-floor air system that tenants can control and the building is naturally ventilated. "For 50% of the year, we bring air into the building from outside, where it cools down the slabs within the structure," says Morris. "The heat gained by people and computers gets absorbed into the concrete and the cycle goes around. So, we're using natural resources."

A little over three miles away, Belgian developer Ghelamco has just completed The



Well appointed: The Arc in Shoreditch (this image, left and below) will include a roof terrace, a yoga studio, treatment rooms and a gym



