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The latest trends in designing for Health & Wellbeing

1. Describe three ways in which specific design strategies (e.g., biophilic design, circadian lighting, or acoustic control) support physical and/or mental health in the built environment.

Design strategies such as biophilic design, circadian lighting, and acoustic control support health by integrating natural elements and greenery that reduce stress and enhance cognitive restoration, providing lighting systems that align indoor environments with human biological rhythms to improve sleep quality and emotional regulation, and managing sound through materials and spatial planning that minimise noiserelated fatigue and anxiety while fostering calm, focused spaces.

2. A developer plans to retrofit an office building to prioritise user health and wellbeing. Propose two design interventions based on recent trends and research in wellbeing-focused design. Justify your response by referencing the impact on users and the potential implications for stakeholders, sustainability, and cost.

A good retrofit strategy would be to introduce biophilic elements (such as living walls, indoor plants, and nature-inspired materials) to reduce stress, boost morale and productivity (supported by research showing greener offices improve well-being and job satisfaction), and install circadian-aligned lighting systems that mimic natural daylight cycles to regulate occupants' sleep patterns, enhance mood, and reduce fatigue (a trend strongly tied to healthier and more productive workplaces, these interventions benefit users directly through better health and comfort, while for stakeholders they can lower absenteeism and turnover, support sustainability through reduced energy use, and—even though there's an upfront cost—offer long-term returns in employee retention and operational savings.

3. Which of the following best describes how architects are embedding wellbeing into core design practice?

- A. By designing only for aesthetics and cultural symbolism
- B. By relying solely on client preferences, without community input
- C. By integrating environmental data, research insights, and inclusive design principles
- D. By reducing design timelines to speed up project delivery

Correct Answer: C