



Naturawalls limit noise pollution while providing a range of other benefits | Photo source [Naturawall](#)

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PLANT-COVERED NOISE PROTECTION BARRIERS PROVIDE NEW ANIMAL HABITATS

 ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

The steel walls are easy-to-install, long-lasting, and recyclable

Spotted: Noise pollution is a sometimes overlooked but extremely serious issue. In fact, the European Environment Agency *estimates* that, in Europe, environmental noise contributes to 48,000 new cases of ischaemic heart disease a year as well as 12,000 premature deaths. In response, organisations and privacy-minded individuals resort to noise protection barriers. But now, one company, Naturawall, has developed a nature-friendly new solution – plant-covered steel barriers that block noise.

Requiring less material than traditional concrete barriers, Naturawall barriers provide protection from sound pollution and additional habitats for animals and insects. The barriers are available for public, private, and commercial use, and the company provides guidance on planting hardy, native plant species.

The barriers require a flattened area of ground and are then filled with soil. Plants can be added over time, and customisable features, including colour, height, and base width, make the walls easy to adapt to a variety of locations and sizes. The structures also work on curved or sloped locations. Each installation includes a water management system and a weed prevention fabric to support initial plant growth.

As well as blocking noise, the barriers also absorb airborne pollutants, and the living wall continually cleans the surrounding air. Set-up of the barriers is minimally invasive, with prefabricated pieces fitted together on site. Should a wall no longer be needed, the steel it is made from is recyclable.

Springwise has also spotted living walls being used in carbon-neutral [home development](#) projects and as a means of [reducing food miles](#) by growing produce in a supermarket car park.

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Takeaway:

Urban populations across [Europe](#) and [Asia](#) are expected to continue growing through 2050, with Asia's urban-rural divide diverging most sharply. Despite population growth generally slowing, overall increases suggest continued intensification of residential density in already busy cities. Living walls, such as those developed by Naturawall, could provide peace and respite as well as a host of additional benefits for those living in increasingly crowded and noisy urban areas.