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Meet the surveyor who gives your house a heat rating

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Why living near a reactor has become popular in Provence

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Take the train, not the plane, to your Euro holiday home

The wireless ones, known as OWIS, can be bought for as little as £35 on the internet (www.theowl.com), through some electricity suppliers, and even at some branches of B&Q and Carphone Warehouse. But be warned: they can

site, a plasma TV costs 52p a day, or 211p a year, to run, compared with £38 a year for a conventional 28-inch TV.

Leaving most electronic devices on standby is a huge no-no of course – they still can use up to 90 per cent of the elec-

has been delayed and could be held back amid fierce resistance from the electricity generators, who see them as a distraction from what one described as the 'main event' – the UK-wide introduction of interactive

small hotels are not even commercially available if you want to get your hands on one. EDUs are out there to be bought straight away. But don't expect to hear about them from your supplier unless you are a customer of Scottish and

discovered that by turning down the heat and the motor speed on my hair-dryer the power drain fell from 1,700 watts to 550. So you can have the occasional good hair day and care for the planet at the same time, after all.

Brighton stands tall for eco-friendly living

Buildings are responsible for half of our carbon dioxide emissions.

Harriet Meyer finds a greener future in some flats on the south coast

BRIGHTON IS renowned for its eco-friendliness: residents and visitors can access an eclectic mix of green services, from organic pubs to vegetarian shoe shops – and a zero-carbon development is soon to be added to the list.

One Brighton, built jointly by Crest Nicholson and sustainable developer BioRegional Quintain, will comprise a mix of 172 studios, one- and two-bedroom 'eco apartments' in the emerging New England quarter, ranging from £145,000 to £285,000. 'We're creating something very green but available in the mainstream, combining the skills of the two companies for the best result,' says Pooran Desai, sustainability director for BioRegional Quintain.

A staggering 50 per cent of the UK's carbon footprint comes from running

buildings, according to the UK Green Buildings Council. Such concerns are seeing developers devise new ways to reduce their impact. 'About 58 per cent of the concrete frame is made from recycled materials, reducing carbon emissions by a third,' says Desai. 'We're using natural clay blocks and wood fibre for insulation – the first large-scale use of these materials in the UK.'

The development takes its environmental principles and name on the One Planet Living principles of sustainability, drawn up with support from the WWF. The aim is to build a community designed to run entirely on renewable energy. Principles include achieving zero-waste status through recycling and composting, using sustainable building materials where possible, implementing sustainable transport solutions and measures to support local suppliers, food and wildlife.

Health and happiness is another listed principle, although how the development achieves this is less obvious. 'We can't force people to be happy, but healthy food, walking and cycling all contribute to a healthier way of living, which makes people

Cleaner angle: the corner view of One Brighton apartments.



happier,' says Desai. If all 10 of the One Planet Living principles are met, One Brighton will meet the EcoHomes 'Excellent' standard.

Once built, half the total energy on site will come from a renewable wood heating system and solar panels, with green electricity supplied from eight wind turbines. All communal areas will use eco lightbulbs, with all fitted appliances rated A or better.

One Brighton provides no spaces for resident parking. Each home is provided with secure bicycle storage facilities, and buyers get free car club membership through City Car Club, with access to five vehicles on-site. This will enable eco-conscious motorists to aid the environment and save money, as the cost of running a car, including insurance, fuel and parking, amounts to around £5,500 a year, according to the AA.

Sainsbury's is just seconds away, but residents are encouraged to use local box schemes and there will be occasional farmers' markets to support local suppliers. With pressure for land space fierce among

developers, incorporating a plot to grow fruit or vegetables is another innovation in sustainable living. Residents of One Brighton will have access to private and communal rooftop mini-allotments to exercise their green fingers.

'The development will be punctuated with gardens,' says Desai. 'It's important for us to have as much open space as possible.' The green walls and roofs dotted around the development will be made of sturdy sedums and mosses to attract wildlife, tended by an on-site caretaker.

The development got off the ground in 1999, when Brighton Urban Design and Development (Budd) contacted BioRegional Quintain to suggest building an eco-residence on the last plot of land available on the site. 'They chose us because we put together the BedZed project, an eco-village in south London, and they wanted us to help advise on how to make the site more green,' says Desai. BioRegional Quintain, in partnership with Crest Nicholson and Southern Housing Group, has also been selected as the preferred developer by the London Development Agency for the mayor's flagship One Gallions zero-carbon scheme in the Thames Gateway.

Flats at One Brighton are on sale now: www.onebrighton.co.uk; 0870 752 1820