

PASSIVE HOUSE+

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

AIRS & GRACES

Pioneering engineer's air-heated passive wonder



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Midsummer nightmare

Designing to avoid overheating

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Photos: Filip Šlapal

HOUSE ON WINDY PEAK, ORE MOUNTAINS, CZECH REPUBLIC

This gorgeously simple house has been dubbed 'House on Windy Peak' by architects Stempel & Tesar, and true to its name, it is located 750 metres up in the Ore Mountains of the northern Czech Republic, not far from the border with Germany.

And how better to protect yourself against the cold, windy winters up here than by living in a passive house? Built from clay blocks that are externally insulated and clad in the dark timber typical of the region, that house's simple, rational form — a hallmark of Stempel & Tesar's work — befits the stark mountain setting. It also made it easier to meet the passive house standard, too, by minimising the area from which heat could escape.

And while the house is sited near a wind farm, the architects report that the super-insulated, airtight structure is excellent at blocking out any noise. Meanwhile, the main elevation faces south from the mountainside, and the living area is lined with large floor-to-ceiling windows to make the most of the sweeping views.

The short summer season also inspired the addition of a 'winter garden' — a covered terrace in the central part of the southwestern facade that can be accessed from the living and dining rooms. Thanks to a large sliding window, the space can be permanently opened during the warm season, and shut off in winter. "It has become the heart of the house," say the architects.

