The green roof on this remodeled single-family home in the Bernal Heights neighborhood is designed to be both functional and natural. The roof’s ten inches of lightweight growing media provides thermal mass and insulation, and holds the thick vegetation. The rooftop was originally planted with native species, but additional local plants have colonized it over time through seeds brought by birds and wind. This combination gives the roof a natural look and feel similar to nearby Bernal Hill (pictured in the background above). The owner remarked that “I wanted to plant a green roof for its thermal mass, but I wanted it to be as natural as possible, to achieve that, what better partner could I have found than nature itself?”

The roof is accessible for maintenance through a retractable staircase and roof hatch.