

Green Development – Frequently Asked Questions:

What does “Building Green” Really Mean?

They term Green from a building and design perspective simply means building homes and buildings that are environmentally friendly. In other words, it looks at design, location, construction, materials, appliances, fixtures, ventilation and even landscaping and the environmental impact it has on its surroundings. Some of these impact factors include pollution, erosion, use of energy, loss of energy, seepage, use of water, emission of gases, surrounding foliage, noise, traffic, density of inhabitants and the underlying groundwater table.

- Design - How the overall project, start to finish will impact the surrounding environment and its inhabitants.
- Location - Where is the property in relationship to its surrounding environment and inhabitants and how well does it blend in and/or take advantage of the natural resources associated with it e.g. sun, trees, wind etc.
- Construction - How well is the building constructed in terms of durability and sustainability. Is it built to minimize its impact on the environment is now occupies?
- Materials - A key to green design is the use of materials within the construction and how they react to the factors of time and exposure to the elements, e.g. do they contain chemicals that seep into the groundwater table or break down quickly due to prolonged exposure to rain or sun requiring replacement. Are the materials taken from natural resources thereby depleting those resources (e.g. stone and trees) or do they use recycled materials. For example, many people do not realize that the fabrication of many building materials in itself pollute the environment, whereas recycled materials require much less, if any treatment to be reused that damage the environment.
- Appliances - Do the appliances within the building minimize the use of energy (electricity or gas) or the loss of energy once used?
- Fixtures - Do the fixtures (e.g. bathroom) minimize the use of water or the loss of water once used?
- Ventilation - Is the building designed to vent internal gas emissions (e.g. chemicals from paint and carpets, cooking and septic) from safely away from the inhabitants?
- Landscaping - In this case there are two factors to consider; does the design take advantage of the existing and natural vegetation surrounding it, and does new vegetation provide a benefit? Beneficial plants for instance like Bamboo aid in the absorption of CO² gases, whereas some plants are actually

detrimental to the area. This type of vegetation is typically “exotic” (nonnative) and can be anything from problematic such as Olive Trees (high levels of pollen) to “invasive” such as Kudzu that grows aggressively, spreads, and displaces other plants and actually invade/destroy the existing ecosystems.

Building green isn't just about improving your health or saving the planet. Today's techniques can also save you money and make your projects more marketable. Green building techniques reduce energy and water use, improve indoor air quality, are sensitive to site development issues, incorporate environmentally friendly building materials, and more.

Finally, the concept of Green is also a process that can actually prove to be a greater investment for the owner over the long run in that the structure is made with better materials for sustainability and exceeds today's most stringent building codes that will some day be mandatory rather than voluntary. Where other developers who took the easier route to maximize profits by lower costs and building times will eventually pay more to retrofit structures to meet these codes in the future or even pay severe penalties on ecologically hazardous properties.

What is Urban Infill?

Urban Infill is the process of building homes, businesses and public facilities on unused or “skipped over” parcels of land within an existing urban area. This concept is important because it helps grow urban areas to be better utilized, increase land value and a lower cost-to-build rate per square foot and most importantly, allows cities to become more environmentally and socially sustainable.

What is Land Recycling?

Whereas Urban Infill builds on unused parcels of land, Land Recycling reuses previously developed land within urban areas. The impact on urban areas is as important to its inhabitants as infill projects and in most cases the costs can be justified with increased property values once the existing structures are removed. The same concept is becoming increasingly popular in suburban areas where homeowners buy “knockdowns” to rebuild new homes over existing older and lower valued homes.

What is Green Development?

Green building is the process of building a structure that values the environment around it, to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants with minimal ecological consequences to the environment.

Green Development simply creates a larger holistic strategy that takes a Green Building project from “cradle to grave” by designing a sustainable structure that balances economic, social, and environmental factors. Sustainable design principles affect all phases of project development, from design, construction, operations and maintenance, and demolition and disposal.

What does Green Development mean to me?

Simply put, Green Development means to the consumer or inhabitant, a living or working space that is a healthier place to live, does minimal damage to the ecosystem around it and in the long run provides the owner a better investment.

Why does LEED certification matter?

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System is a performance-oriented, consensus-developed rating system under which credits are earned for satisfying specific green building criteria.

The five major environmental categories of review include: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality.

LEED certification means the structure that you inhabit has met the stringent standards of the US Green Builders Council (<http://www.usgbc.org/>) in all five categories and can pass all requirements. As requirements for Green Building codes become stricter in the future and since builders warranties are time bound, the owner of the structure can be assured that their property will meet future requirements without costly retrogrades.

What does sustainable design mean?

To quote Wikipedia, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_design) "Sustainable design (also referred to as "green design", "eco-design", or "design for environment") is the art of designing physical objects to comply with the principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability. It ranges from the microcosm of designing small objects for everyday use, through to the macrocosm of designing buildings, cities, and the earth's physical surface. It is a growing trend within the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, industrial design and interior design.

The essential aim of sustainable design is to produce places, products and services in a way that reduces use of non-renewable resources, minimizes environmental impact, and relates people with the natural environment. Sustainable design is often viewed as a necessary tool for achieving sustainability. It is related to the more heavy-industry-focused fields of industrial ecology and green chemistry, sharing tools such as life cycle assessment and life cycle energy analysis to judge the environmental impact or "greenness" of various design choices.

Sustainable design is a reaction to the global "environmental crisis", i.e., rapid growth of economic activity and human population, depletion of natural resources, damage to ecosystems and loss of biodiversity.[1] Proponents of sustainable design believe that the crisis is in large part caused by conventional design and industrial practices, which disregard the risks and environmental impacts associated with goods and services. Green design is considered a means of reducing or eliminating these impacts while maintaining quality of life by using careful assessment and clever design to substitute less harmful products and processes for conventional ones.

What do I sacrifice by applying Green Development to my next home?

Probably the biggest misconception about Developing a Green structure is that the final product will be Spartan, boring, uncomfortable or treefort-like. Most believe that to be environmentally conscious means you hug trees, live outdoors and give up many comforts that are considered luxurious or decadent.

The truth is Building Green doesn't mean you have to catch rainwater, grow your own vegetables or use solar panels to heat your water, although it doesn't hurt if you do. To build a Green home today merely means you use materials that have low impact on the environment, blend into the surrounding environment and conserve precious resources such as energy through lowered use of electricity and better insulation materials.

With a little planning, not only does the consumer sacrifice nothing in the short-term but can actually improve their investment long-term. All that's required is doing a little homework before you building on things that will ultimately go into your home such as:

- Windows and Doors (Low E and Low VOC paints)
- Appliances (EnergyStar®)
- Heat Pumps (SEER Rating)
- Insulation (R Value)

With the use of new fabrication techniques, homes can incorporate some of the "hottest" and most state-of-the-art materials in existence today such as glass, steel, stone, concrete, ceramics and wood that meet the needs of both the environment *and* the consumer.

How much will it cost me to go Green?

Although each project is unique in terms of costs, building a Green project will most likely save the investor more in the long-term as the structure will meet more rigid codes of the future, last longer in terms of replacement costs and save on increasing energy costs (e.g. oil, gas and electricity). As of today, there is no data that demonstrates that Building Green significantly increases the costs to the homeowner other than some materials may cost more to purchase or take longer to order. Overall, the long-term savings and increases to home and property values will far outweigh and slight increases in short-term building costs.

What will a green design mean to my investment?

As described above, building a home that will last longer, pollute less and conserve more energy can only increase your investment in the long-term irrespective of if/when stricter Green Building codes are mandated and enforced.

Why is it hip to be Green?

For many reasons, building a state-of-the-art home is not only ahead of the curve in terms of trends and status, it shows the world that the homeowner is

both environmentally aware and an astute investor. Why be a follower when you can be a leader.

Do I have to build Green?

No, there are not mandatory rules or building codes that currently force homeowners/builders to build Green, however there is no downside at present to build Green in terms of cost or comfort and in the long run, there will most likely be less cost to the homeowner in the future to retrograde their property when codes are made stricter.

Does it really make a difference or is it just the newest fad?

There are many debates going on in Hollywood and Washington DC today as to legitimacy, impact or outcome of Global Warming on our environment. This website does not claim to have the answer or the solution to this growing problem however everyone on this planet has a stake and a say in the problem regardless of its current severity.

Whether or not companies and nations come together in the future to make changes for the better is out of our control but how we live our lives in terms of where we live can have a positive impact on our own lives as well as those of the inhabitants that live around us, no matter how many legs they walk on.

Building Green is not a fad or a short term trend and in fact the concept has evolved exponentially in the past few years. Many believe that environmental concerns are in the minds of a few free spirits who don't know that the 60's are over but in reality the idea of environmental protection is being embraced by major corporations, city/state governments and even the most conservative high net worth individuals.

As stated above, there is no downside or reason to not build Green. At the end of the day, you can do it to save the world or increase your personal investments. Green may or may not be an "Inconvenient Truth," but it can be whatever you want it to be and you can do it for whatever reasons you want!

How can I find out more?

There literally hundreds of books, websites, magazines and newspaper articles available for additional information. In addition to the links provided on our website, please feel free to contact us at info@develop-green.com.