

SEEING GREEN:

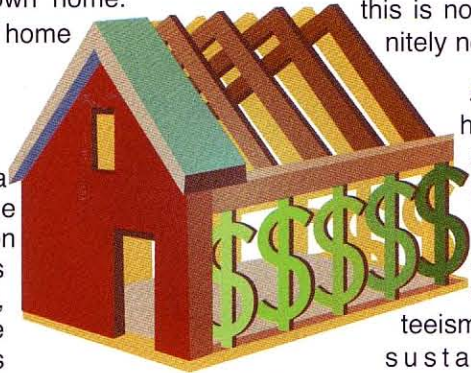
understanding the economics of a green home



Nowadays it seems that we are constantly reminded of the environmental problems that face our world and that we need to do something about it. Problems like global warming and depletion of oil supplies are not just causing political conflicts, but can seem overwhelming to an individual trying to "do the right thing." However, we can all take steps as individuals that can help the environment; starting right in our own home. Below are steps to make your home more sustainable.

What

Sustainable design is a fast growing market in the architecture and construction community. Sustainable is more than just the eco, green, efficient design seen in the 1970's. Sustainability means



meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It involves the environment, equality and economics. That's right economics.

An
At Home in Edmond
Special Feature

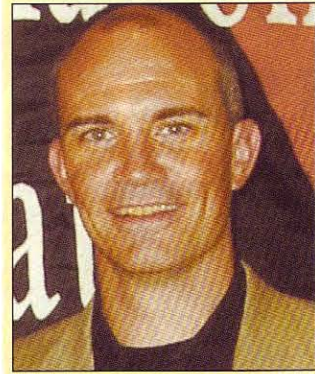
by Jay Yowell, AIA, LEED AP

Why

Homes that are designed in a sustainable manner save on energy costs, material costs and maintenance costs. Many think that it will cost more to "green" up a home, but this is not always the case. It is definitely not the case in the long run.

Another benefit of these homes is that they are healthier to live in. Many studies have proven that schools with more natural daylight and fresh air have higher test scores and lower absenteeism. Office buildings built with sustainable

Continued on Page 49



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Yowell is also a founding member of the Edmond Land Conservancy and has authored a number of state and regional publications on the subjects of architecture and sustainable design.

Seeing Green/green homes...

Continued from Page 14

principles report higher profits due to more productivity and again, lower absenteeism. If corporate and community buildings can benefit from sustainable design, so can the places we live.

How

There are two principles that I have students and clients think about to answer HOW to implement sustainable design. One is conservation and the other is to think about the vernacular architecture of the area.

Conservation

It is crucial to think about conservation of land, energy, materials and water. Land conservation is extremely important, and for more than just a warm-fuzzy-hug-a-tree feeling. Open space and trees add to the value of an area and to your property. In fact, when my home was assessed in Dallas, the old pecan tree we had in our back yard added approximately \$10,000 to the value of the home.

Wind energy can be purchased from our utility companies and simple improvements like making windows and doors airtight, switching to compact fluorescent bulbs and using efficient appliances all save energy.

The marketplace provides many sustainable materials: recycled carpet, bamboo, cork, certified wood, composite decking and siding just to name a few. Also, during construction many of the materials can be recycled.

After the summer we just had, it is easy to see the need for water conservation. You can easily conserve water in your home by watching how much you use and installing low-flow plumbing fixtures. But you can also conserve how much water you use outside your home. Rainwater collection is easy and economical to use. I am amazed with just a small amount of rainfall; our 50 gallon barrel fills up and allows us to water the adjacent beds. Planting native, drought tolerant plants is another way to save water and therefore save on your monthly bill.

Vernacular

Look at how homes and neighborhoods were designed before air conditioning. They were oriented with the majority of the house facing south, little exposure to the west and here in Oklahoma, had deep overhangs. Design elements like these were more than stylistic theories; they were common sense methods of living in the environment the house was built in and doing so economically.

This is just a brief overview of what can be done in your existing or new home. Many resources exist for homeowners to utilize in order to help with regards to the seemingly overwhelming environmental problems around us.