

Encouraging the Green Market Shift:

A Tool for Practical Use in Homebuilding

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Introduction:

The current regime of “laissez faire” economics will be hard-pressed to meet the resource needs of the expected world population. The demand for resources and materials to house this growing population alone will be catastrophic.

Therefore, there is an immense need for a green market shift - allowing homeowners to make more sustainable decisions.

Through a compilation of information gathered from architects, contractors, service providers, product retailers, economists, health specialists, and likeminded researchers, I have created a database which provides homeowners with the tools they need to make the green homebuilding shift possible.

The Main Issue: A Shaky Foundation

The homebuilding sector is failing to account for the long-term impacts of our building methods. Our homes are having a lasting, harmful impact on the environment.

Given our current methods of home construction, meeting the expected housing demand will be challenging. Therefore, there is an immediate need to shift towards sustainable design in homebuilding. This shift would require an examination of our current cost benefit analysis systems and would challenge us to begin thinking about the long-range effects of our current methods of building and remodeling.



Aerial photo of Levittown, N.Y.
Photo Courtesy of the Associated Press



Mass Produced — “Cookie Cutter Homes”
Photo Courtesy of Keith Johnson, *Deseret Morning News*

Current Trends and Conditions: The Crooked Studs

Current methodologies focus on building homes that are mass produced. This style of home is accepted in order to save on costs. As a result, these homes are often (a) detrimental to the surrounding environment, (b) waste vast amounts of energy and resources during the building’s lifetime, (c) utilize products that are toxic to human health, and (d) are often times not even aesthetically pleasing.

While this method of building was the quickest and most cost effective building technique in the short run, it gives little consideration to the natural environment and the long-term fitness of the home.

A Sustainable Alternative: Rebuilding a Solid Structure

Green building is the most viable alternative to modern building techniques. By definition, a green building is one which (a) incorporates green construction and design methods, (b) uses renewable resources, and (c) takes advantage of clean technologies. As an added bonus, green homes can also have the following characteristics:

- . Are longer lasting
- . Promote healthier living conditions
- . Take into consideration the natural environment
- . Cause less environmental degradation
- . Offer long-term cost savings



Issaquah House— Green Solar Home
Photo Courtesy of <www.builtgreen.net>

Conclusion: A Tool for Practical Use in Homebuilding

In today’s fast-paced economy, homeowners are settling for less environmentally-friendly homes because of a lack of time, a misguided cost-benefit analysis, a lack of access to quality information, and the nonexistence of effective consumer incentives.

Therefore, in hopes to overcome these obstacles and to promote green building as a viable alternative to current methods of building, I have created an informational tool comprised of research related to green products and materials. This tool provides homeowners with the information they need to make the green homebuilding shift a reality.

