

SUMMER  
2014

**WINNING**  
BEST IN AMERICAN

REDEFINING  
HOME AND  
COMMUNITY

# OUTDOOR LIVING For Infill Homes

GREEN KEEPS ON GROWING

A HOME FOR A HERO

LOW-INCOME HOMES  
GET HEALTHY



Published by the National  
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# LIVING

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of BALA Design Trends



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THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SERVICE

# Designing a Home for a Wounded War Hero

**The home building industry can help meet the housing needs of returning heroes who have courageously served our country, allowing them to enjoy the American dream of homeownership. For builders, architects, remodelers, tradespeople, suppliers, interior designers, and others in the industry, working together to provide a home is one way to give back to America's warriors who have suffered harm in service to our country. It is one way to say thank you for their service.**

At this year's International Builders' Show in Las Vegas, the NAHB Design Committee conducted a live design competition in conjunction with the American Institute of Building Design (AIBD) and Building Homes for Heroes, an organization that is strongly committed to supporting the brave men and women of the military who have returned home from the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan with severe wounds and disabilities. The challenge was to design a home for one of these wounded veterans.

## THE CLIENT

A veteran in his mid-twenties, the client is missing both legs and half of his pelvis and requires use of a wheelchair 100 percent of the time. He also has a traumatic brain injury that periodically affects his hearing. Because of his injuries, family

members visit often to help out and may need a place to stay for a day or two. The client enjoys skydiving and would like to pursue a career with either the Department of Homeland Security, or the FBI's Counterterrorism Division.

## THE PROGRAM

Each team was asked to design a three-bedroom single-family detached home between 2,000 and 2,500 square feet, with a study and at least two baths. The home was to be built on a lot that would accommodate a home no wider than 50 feet. It needed to include a two-car garage wide enough for a customized van and ramp. The design was required to include universal design features that would not be obvious to the owner or houseguests. In addition to the programmatic



By Jaclyn S. Toole, Assoc. AIA, CGP



requirements, the design was to take into consideration life-cycle costs, as well as be low maintenance and energy efficient. Contestants were informed that the home was to be sited in Northern Virginia, where surrounding neighborhoods include many different architectural styles such as Colonial, Shingle, Nantucket, Modern and Craftsman. More specific criteria included planning for an eight-inch exterior wall system, 10-foot ceilings, and a finished floor no more than 16 inches above grade. Building Homes for Heroes noted that, “Most home recipients don’t want a ‘handicapped house.’” The organization wanted this to be reflected in the way the universal design features were incorporated in the home.

### THE SOLUTIONS

Working with this set of guidelines, three design teams from different parts of the country were given just nine hours to complete designs that satisfied these design requirements and incorporated the personal interests and specific needs of the client.

Each of these three teams presented its design scheme to a panel of judges and attendees of the International Builders’ Show. The three design concepts were posted in the exhibit hall for attendees to evaluate. Attendees were asked to vote via text for the design solution they thought best met the requirements. A judging panel of three well-known residential architects and a builder then reviewed the plans and considered the votes.

## THE DESIGN TEAMS

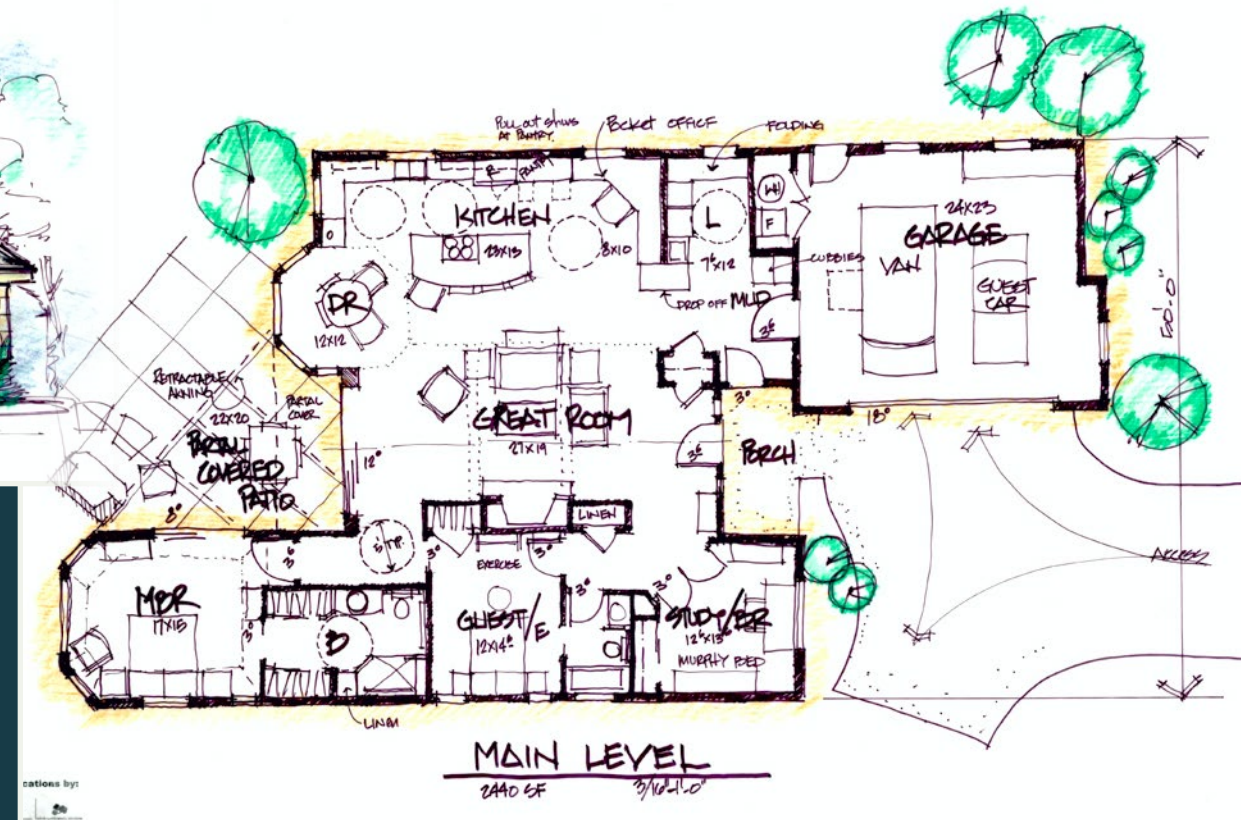
Three teams of architects took on the challenge of creating thoughtful designs for this disabled veteran’s unique needs.



## Team 1

**Collaborative Design Group & Rocky Mountain Plan Company, Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Larry Gilland, AIBD, LEED AP, NCBDC, CSI •  
Bernie Kern, AIBD • Jennifer Dastur, IIDA, LEED AP





Drawing Board

The panel included Michael Medick of BSB Design in Des Moines, Iowa, Mary DeWalt of Mary DeWalt Design Group in Austin, Texas, Victor Mirontschuk of EDI International in New York, and Ken Boynton of Boynton Construction in Vernon, Connecticut.

After hours of debate and discussion, the judging panel named Team 3—Chuck Harrison and Kevin Holdridge—the winners, saying their design solution best met the needs of the client and also fulfilled the programmatic requirements.

“Team 3’s floor plan is very livable for the client without looking like it was designed for a person in a wheelchair,” said DeWalt. The judges also praised the plan’s large, open great room, noting that it allows for easy maneuverability. The great room’s central location also serves as a buffer between the client’s and caregiver’s suites, the judges noted, which gives each resident enough privacy, but still

allows them to be nearby in case of emergency. The judges commended the oversized, dual-height island, noting it was useful for both food prep and wheelchair accessible dining.

The judges also liked the way the home’s exterior spaces connect seamlessly with the interior while allowing for privacy and security in the rear of the house.

“All three design teams created exceptionally accommodating designs,” said DeWalt. “But Harrison and Holdridge created a unique space that meets this client’s needs the best.”



Jaclyn S. Toole, Assoc. AIA, CGP, is the Senior Program Manager, Green Building at NAHB.



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– Kathy Browning, CMP, MIRM, CGP, Virginia Beach, VA



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# Daylighting

## Bright, Warm, & Green

By John Ritterpusch

**Designing with the strategic use of sunlight will make your homes brighter, cozier—and more energy efficient.**

Remember the delight in discovering that cozy spot in the house where you were bathed by the warming sun as you feasted on the pages of a favorite novel? That pleasant experience can still be had today; all that is required is an understanding of good design when integrating daylighting into the home.

Proper daylighting should never involve chance and is more than just incorporating additional glazing into opaque walls. Rather, it involves the strategic placement of windows, skylights, and reflective surfaces that take advantage of sunlight, in all its various intensities, throughout the day.

Bright and cheery rooms depend on the warmth and comfort of the sun's illuminating rays. So why are some homes lacking significant sunlight and

others are blessed with an abundance? The answer is both simple and elegant.

Correct orientation of the home will maximize the sun's rays as it arcs across the sky through seasonal variations. Appropriate east-west placement of the home on the property invites as much daylight into the house as possible, and takes advantage of a southern exposure when winter's shorter days rob homes of summer's lasting brilliance.

Of course, there are times when a home cannot take full advantage of proper orientation, whether due to siting issues with the lot, or land development constraints. But good design can come to the rescue with smart floor plans and clever building products that can brighten any living space.

Smart floor plans and clever building products can bring plenty of daylight into any living space. This community, Bellasol at Rosecrest in Herriman, Utah, features net-zero homes equipped with photovoltaic energy systems.







Adding a high, wide window above the bed's headboard invites light in while maintaining privacy.

## WINDOWS AND LOCATION

Location is critical to a successful floor plan because the designer must consider which rooms will benefit from the available daylight—and living rooms, family rooms, kitchens and bedrooms are the prime candidates. These spaces thrive on saturated, well-balanced, natural light. Larger, deeper rooms require more light to maintain a consistent light level throughout because of the reduction of light as it reaches further into a room. Conversely, smaller rooms require less.

Windows, of course, are the most familiar means of bringing light into an interior. Pay particular attention to window size and placement. A large picture window in the kitchen may add charm to the look of the house, but its more important function is to bring ample natural light into an area that is both a meeting and work space. A smaller window, though less expensive, would detract from both the ambiance and functionality of the space.

Patio doors and French doors can play an important role in daylighting, as they open a whole new window to the great outdoors. They are more than just a means of egress and can flood large interior areas with abundant natural light. The same can be said for transoms and sidelights, as they chase away the dark from foyers and hallways.

Another design concept to consider is that windows from

multiple orientations provide the optimum mix for balanced room daylighting. Light entering from more than one direction provides better distribution, which translates into less contrast, fewer shadows and brighter corners. Deep windowsills painted white can add lumens to a space, creating a sun-filled area that is both spacious and inviting. Even angled window jambs can contribute to improved light distribution, and windows adjacent to white walls will have the added benefit of reflectance that will further brighten a home's interior.

## REFLECTIVE SURFACES

Reflectance should be an important design consideration in every room in the house, especially as it relates to room finishes. Choosing brighter or whiter paint colors can be used to create the illusion of greater space. More reflective paints often find their best use in walls opposite windows. For ceilings, use white—any other color will reduce daylighting.

Living spaces in an open floor plan unencumbered by walls allow the sun's illumination to have full reach. But not every home is designed with such openness and exposure in mind. Fortunately, it's not difficult to improve or correct lighting issues in interior spaces that have inadequate or non-existent natural light.

## SKYLIGHTS AND LIGHT TUBES

Skylights are a great way to bring in sunshine, even in areas where direct sunlight is an uncommon commodity. These products can transform any room from a dreary dungeon to an uplifting space. On sunny days, they provide bright shafts of light that slowly move across the room, and they supply diffuse but welcomed light even on overcast days.

To combat dark interiors on the north side of the house, light tubes offer a good solution. This product collects sunlight falling on the roof and channels it down to a ceiling diffuser that disperses daylight evenly into the room. Light tubes require fewer structural considerations than conventional skylights



Windows in the open staircase continue on as a clerestory in the great room of this net-zero home.

and can be installed almost anywhere, making them a practical means for bringing natural daylight into such difficult places as walk-in closets or pantries.

A prime benefit of having plenty of natural light throughout the house is that it reduces the need for electrical illumination. Using the sun to brighten spaces instead of lighting fixtures can significantly cut energy consumption and save utility expenses.

Finally, designing for daylighting is a great selling feature. Home buyers may not always recognize this in their decision making process, but they will intuitively value the warmth, comfort, and ambiance that quality daylighting provides—especially, as they seek out that favorite reading niche in their sunny new home. 🏠

**John Ritterpusch**, is Assistant Vice President of Energy and Green Building at the National Association of Home Builders.





# {niche} to NORM

## Gauging Green's Growth

By Kevin Morrow

A new Smart Market Report shows that green building is growing at light speed, with no signs of slowing.

Here's a game: Rank the following features in order of their prevalence in new homes, highest to lowest:

- Two-story foyer
- Vinyl siding (primarily)
- Full basement
- Green building
- Brick exterior (primarily)
- Deck
- Three-car garage

OK, maybe it's more of a trick than a game since *they're already in order*.

If you're surprised that "green" homes may be more prevalent than new brick

homes these days, you'll be more surprised to learn that, if projections from the latest Smart Market Report from McGraw-Hill Construction and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) hold true, green could jump to second or even first place on this same list within just two years.

Sustainability trend spotters and building industry professionals alike have

come to rely on McGraw Hill's ongoing collaboration with NAHB to measure green market growth and related trends. Released in June 2014, the Smart Market Report compiles responses from across the broad NAHB builder and remodeler membership. This year the scope was expanded to explore

the multifamily sector in greater detail. The report is backed by proprietary research surveys and McGraw-Hill Construction's Dodge database. This is the fourth edition of the study, which has been conducted roughly every other year since 2006.

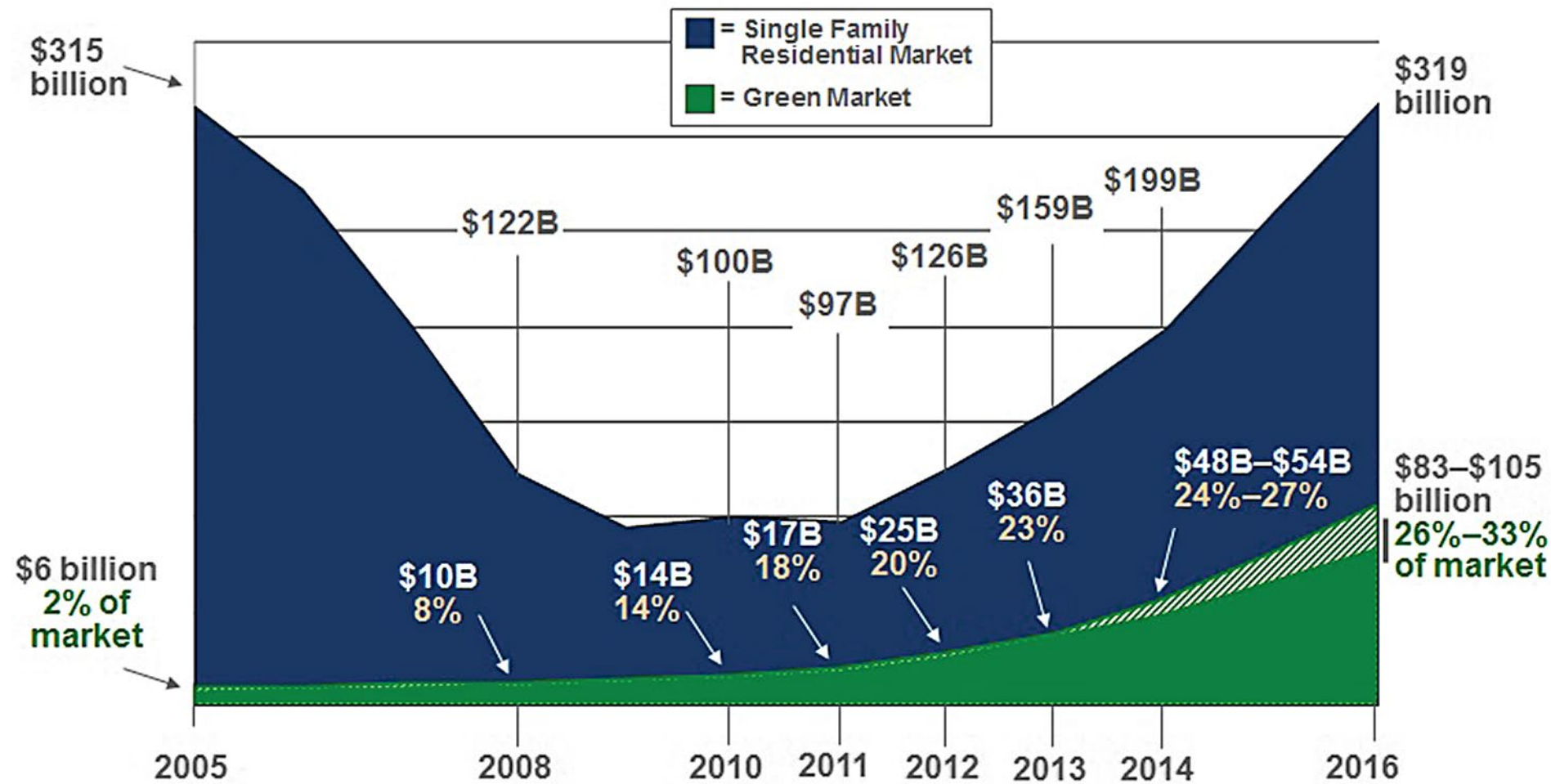
Past Smart Market Report forecasts have proven very accurate, which is why

This home by R.J. Miller Custom Homes is Silver certified to the National Green Building Standard.





## Levels of Residential Green Building Market Activity (2005–2016)



SOURCE: MCGRAW HILL CONSTRUCTION, 2014; BASE VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION MARKET FROM MCGRAW HILL CONSTRUCTION MARKET FORECASTING SERVICE, AS OF JANUARY 30, 2014

the latest iteration is raising eyebrows throughout the housing industry and elsewhere. If green homes are soon to be as common as full basements and other familiar features, then green construction can't seriously be considered a niche any longer. Is green finally mainstream?

Here's what the numbers in the Smart Market Report say: The green home share of the new residential market jumped to 23 percent in 2013. That's a \$37

billion opportunity within an estimated \$160 billion overall market. In 2011, the estimate was 18 percent, or \$17 billion of a smaller \$97 billion market. That equates to a 117 percent opportunity increase for green builders in just two years, comfortably outpacing the increase in the recovering overall market during the same period, somewhere around 65 percent.

And the growth is expected to continue: 24 to 27 percent of new homes this year

will be green and 26 to 33 percent by 2016. To put these figures in perspective, compare them with NAHB tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 *Survey of Construction*, which estimates the prevalence of common residential features. Green homes are, or will soon be, about as common as two-story foyers (33 percent), vinyl siding (32 percent), full basements (29 percent), and brick exteriors (26 percent), and they are already

more prevalent than decks (22 percent) and three-car garages (20 percent).

If the speed of the green sector's predicted growth over the short term is surprising, the pace of its reported growth

**The green homebuilding market is forecasted to grow by more than 1200% in just over a decade.**

over the last decade is simply astounding. In 2005, when the housing market was a robust \$315 billion, the green share was a scant \$6 billion, or about 2 percent of overall. (That's just slightly higher than the proportion of homes built with no laundry facilities whatsoever.) If estimates hold true and housing rebounds to about \$313 billion by 2016, the value of the green segment will have increased somewhere between 1,250 and 1,600 percent in just over a decade—a staggering pace by industry standards.

### MARKETING MESSAGES, BRAND AWARENESS, PREFERRED FEATURES, AND MORE

Growth projections are just the beginning of the report's discoveries. It also explores:

- The perceived costs to build or remodel using "green" material and methods
- The external factors both driving and obstructing growth in green building



Marketplace

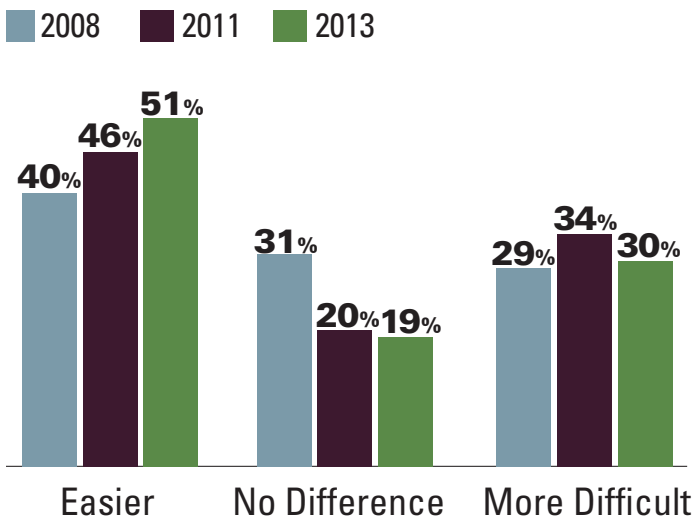
- The correlation between engagement in green building and the perceived ease of selling green homes
- The most effective green home marketing messages
- The green practices and features preferred by industry practitioners
- The use of renewable energy technologies
- Green building product brand awareness
- Green building rating and certification programs

For example, the inconsistency between awareness and use of the leading national green certification programs is another interesting fact to emerge from the study. While LEED® certification maintains higher awareness levels than the ICC-700 National Green Building Standard (NGBS) among both multifamily and single-family builders, usage rates for NGBS standards are twice those of LEED standards among single-family builders surveyed. Use of each program is roughly equal among multifamily builders.

Whether a builder has made the business decision to “go green” or not, the Smart Market Report should put any doubts about the sector’s remarkable growth to rest. It confirms what many industry watchers have been predicting: As housing emerges from the downturn,

Ease in Marketing Green Homes as Compared With Non-Green Homes

(According to Home Builders)



expect a much greater focus on sustainable building practices.

For those building and remodeling practitioners, product suppliers, lenders, realty professionals and others firms who are currently engaged in the green market or are eyeing it as a possibility, this Smart Market Report should be a useful tool in weighing options and developing strategies to leverage a fast-growing market.

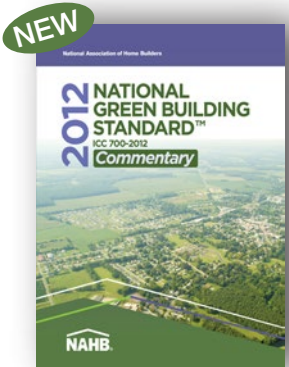
The full Smart Market Report can be downloaded for free at [nahb.org//2014smartmarket](http://nahb.org//2014smartmarket). 🏠

Kevin Morrow is the Director of Sustainability and Green Building at the National Association of Home Builders.



National Association of Home Builders

Green Building Essentials



NATIONAL GREEN BUILDING STANDARD™ COMMENTARY, 2012 EDITION  
National Association of Home Builders

This companion to the ANSI-approved 2012 *National Green Building Standard*™ provides valuable insight to the intention of the practices and provisions found in the *Standard*. The *Commentary* is a useful resource that incorporates all changes made to the 2012 *Standard* and is a valuable tool to assist in the design, construction and compliance of any sustainable residential project.

From *BuilderBooks*, 2014, 200 pp  
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Retail \$45.95  
Retail \$31.99



2012 ICC-700 NATIONAL GREEN BUILDING STANDARD™  
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The 2012 *National Green Building Standard*™ continues to be the only ANSI consensus standard on sustainable green building for residential construction. It features a separate chapter for remodeling. Small projects such as kitchen and bathroom remodels now have their own path within the rating system. The energy efficiency chapter has been substantially revised.

From *BuilderBooks*, 2013, 196 pp  
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Retail \$35.95  
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GREEN BUILDING STRATEGIES: FROM PLAN TO PROFIT

Jeannie Leggett Sikora

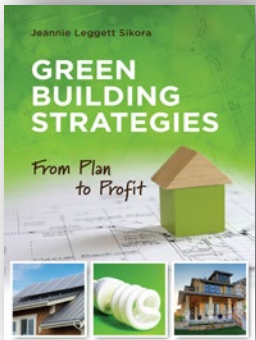
*Green Building Strategies* takes you step-by-step from design through site development and construction, quality assurance, marketing, and customer service. It provides the information you need to systematically create green projects with a price tab both you and your buyers can accept. Includes URLs for essential green building resources.

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# CITY LIVING

## *gets a share of the* **GREAT OUTDOORS**

by Steve James, AIA

Easements combine two narrow side yards into one usable space in the Portfolio Homes by Brookfield Residential at Midtown, a new infill community in Denver.

### Fresh Design for Small Lots and Progressive Lifestyles

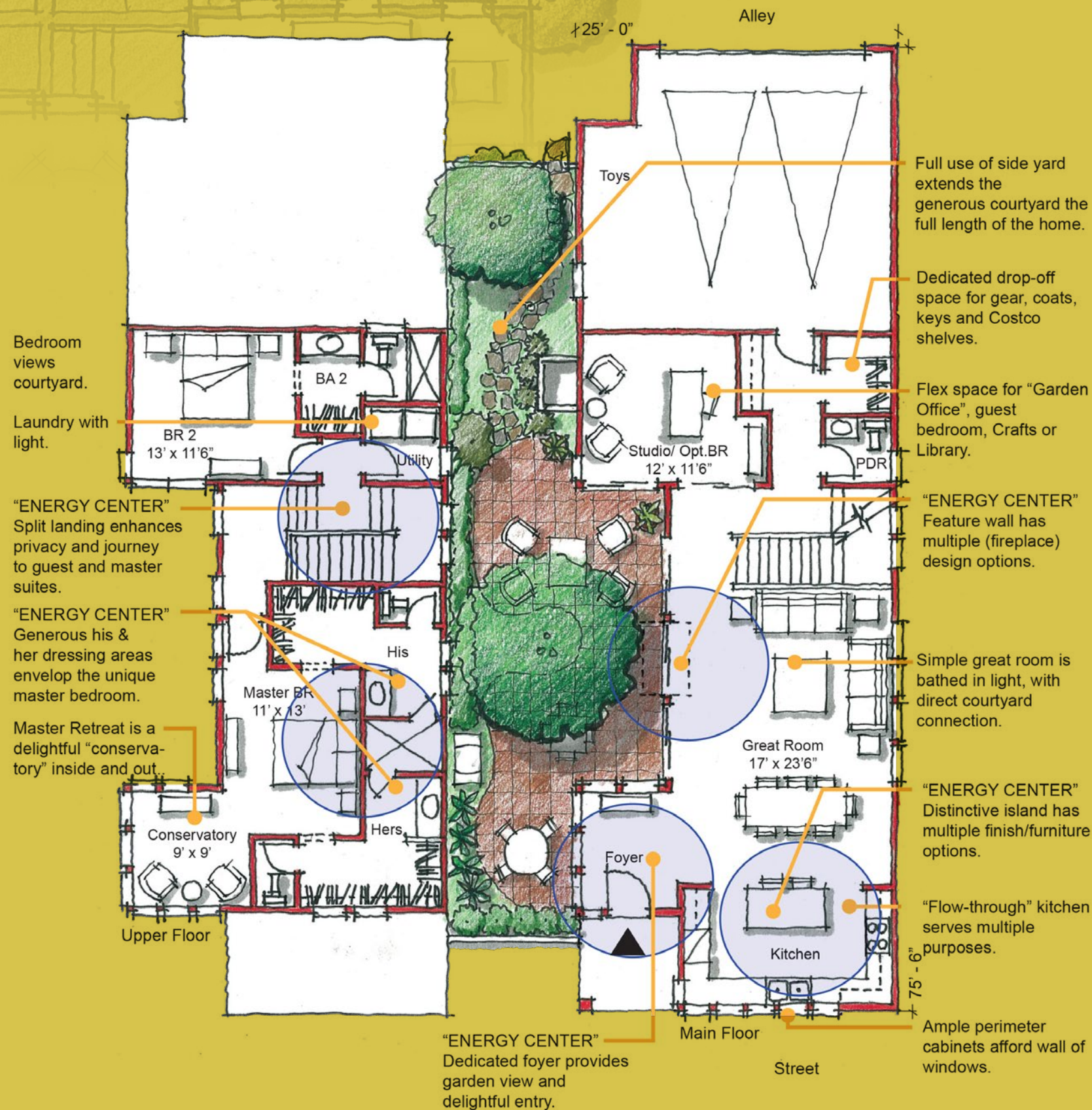
**With light-bathed interiors, entertainment-ready side yards, outdoor greeting foyers, and more, these small-lot plans leverage the great outdoors—and sell twice as fast as “Plain Jane” plans.**

Great outdoor spaces create value, and help sell homes. They integrate nature and sooth the density of urban living. Yet in small-lot housing, outdoor rooms are often skimpy or neglected altogether. The lots are narrow, and the side yard is used for grading and drainage instead of as an amenity. Opportunities abound for creating outdoor space that will enhance the home.

Years ago, DTJ Design answered the call for affordable detached housing in mid-urban locations. Back then, architects created basic two-story solutions that had evolved from “value box” thinking. The outdoor space was “residual,” sandwiched between the home and detached garage. Two feet below the floor level (for grading purposes), this outdoor space was an afterthought, and lacked privacy side-to-side.







Each room in these plans either wraps the courtyard or looks down on it, taking full advantage of natural light and integrating the outdoor living space.

## INTEGRATED DESIGN

Fast forward 15 years, and architects are displaying a fresh attitude in the new discretionary economy. DTJ is creating plans for the same 35-foot lot size, with the same bedroom count. But the side yards are leveraged for meaningful use, and open space becomes a "form-giving" element of the home. Easements combine two narrow side yards into one usable space, the entire length of the lot. This integrated outdoor room becomes the heart of a 25-foot wide plan, living bigger and selling better—in fact, two to one over "value box designs."

The home is essentially one room deep, enveloping the courtyard. Every

room embraces the outdoor space or looks down onto it, with corner alcoves bathed in light. Even circulation to the master suite is a light-filled hallway (with a split-landing stair) offering views to the courtyard below.

## INSPIRED BY NATURE

The entire home takes full advantage of natural light. The plan includes expanded window packages that use innovative products. The home includes five "Energy Centers" —places like the foyer, where personal interaction is key. Here, natural lighting is given special attention and the spaces become portals of light into the rooms





High glazing brings sunshine into the great room while a wall of windows opens the kitchen to the outdoors.

beyond. The dedicated foyer provides a garden view and delightful entry. The expansive great room is bathed in light, with direct courtyard connection. The flow-through kitchen includes generous cabinets, affording a wall of windows. Notably, the master suite has a delightful “conservatory” inside and out. Even the laundry room captures filtered light from the privacy side of the lot.

Celebrating the courtyard expands the living area and home value. Indoor rooms integrate the “outdoor vibe,” while outdoor rooms accommodate furnishings with an “indoor attitude.” The value of real estate is enhanced by leveraging the lot to bring in nature, and maximize indoor-outdoor living.

# Leveraging To Live Larger

## 7 Tips for Refreshing Design

1

**Courtyard Sanctuary**  
*Outdoor space for relaxing and renewal.*

- Combine two side yards to provide the greatest opportunity for outdoor privacy.
- Craft the floor plan around an outdoor room to create the feeling of additional space and leverage the saleable square footage.

2

**Delightful Drive Courts**  
*“Outdoor Arrival Rooms” for high-density clusters.*

- Create shared drive lanes to render increased density. Enhance paving, planting, lighting, and signs to transform what was merely functional space into an amenity.

3

**More Than A Door**  
*An “Entry Journey” that enhances value and identity.*

- Leverage and extend the “greeting foyer” outdoors, by defining an entry area and portal to the front door.

4

**Corner View**  
*Fenestration that increases interior light and perspective.*

- Put light on two sides to make interior rooms appear larger. Group windows around a corner to amplify this effect.

5

**Decks And Canopies**  
*Festive, fun and delightful shade.*

- Use overhead canopies and sunshades to define space and shelter, connecting indoors to out.

6

**Integrated Materials**  
*Surfaces, colors and textures that match, inside and out.*

- Connect indoor and outdoor rooms with common interior and exterior materials.

7

**Outdoor Rooms**  
*Integrated furnishings, within and without.*

- When merchandising models, use indoor furniture and fabrics outdoors to demonstrate how living space is expanded.





### A FOOT IN THE CITY, A HAND IN THE GARDEN.

DTJ designed these new “lifestyle homes” for Midtown, Colorado. Opened in 2013, Midtown is an exciting new infill community in Denver, connected by multiple transit modes and a regional greenbelt trail. Upon completion Midtown will include a mix of 1,300 homes.

With the aim of capturing the “free range spirit”, Midtown’s developers wanted to include a large community garden that would serve as its heart and soul. Residents have a place to grow food and take classes while celebrating “farm to table” events. Showcasing the food the neighborhood produces—a true innovation in community life—has raised

residents’ expectations. They value the stewardship of natural resources more than ever, and expect builders to expand beyond basic green components to use the most progressive building methods and materials. These new homes are fresh and energy smart, at an attainable price point.

Midtown is leveraging the land, connecting homes to nature, and changing the conventional building industry in every way. 🏡

**Steve James, AIA**, is the Founding Principal and Director of Community Design at DTJ Design in Boulder, Colorado.



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By Paul Emrath, Ph.D.

# KEEN for GREEN

Eco-friendly Features Buyers Want  
(and Which Ones Builders Actually Include)

**Homebuyers reveal that they love green features, but don't always want to ante up.**

Homebuyers tend to have a strongly favorable opinion of green features.... *if* the impact on price is not mentioned, according to NAHB's publication [What Home Buyers Really Want](#).

Buyers rated "ENERGY STAR appliances" and "ENERGY STAR rating for the whole home" first and third on a list of 120 home features deemed essential or desirable. Over 70 percent agreed that they would prefer to purchase from a builder who provides energy ratings.

Yet there are limits to buyers' enthusiasm for green. While 94 percent rated ENERGY STAR appliances as at least desirable, a relatively modest 36 percent said ENERGY STAR appliances were essential (a smaller percentage than for items like ceiling fans, exterior lighting, or a bathroom linen closet). And though over 80 percent of home buyers are concerned about the environment, only 14 percent said they were willing to pay more for an environment-friendly home. Further, when responding to a hypothetical cost-benefit scenario, buyers on average revealed they needed a 14



**Figure 1. Share of Single-family Builders Commonly Using Green Products and Practices**



**“The favorable impression of green features among home buyers is clear enough that builders are including a variety of these elements.”**

percent annual rate of return to invest in energy efficiency up front.

Nevertheless, the general favorable impression of green features among home buyers is clear enough that it's not surprising builders have reacted by including a variety of these elements in the homes they build, cost permitting. Evidence comes from a set of “green” questions included on the survey of builders used to generate the [NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index \(HMI\)](#) for November 2013.

Although the main purpose of the survey is to gather the data needed for the HMI measure of builder sentiment, it often includes a set of special questions on a topic of current interest to the housing industry. A total of 325 single-family builders provided answers to the November 2013 questions about their green building features.

What qualifies as a green feature is not always obvious. Typically, industry experts envision something beyond narrowly defined energy efficiency.

The list of 23 green questionnaire products and practices on the HMI questionnaire is based on the major sections of the [National Green Building Standard](#). The survey asked builders to check one of these products or practices if it was commonly used in homes they built during the past year.

At the top of the list are low-e windows and high-efficiency HVAC systems, each used by roughly 90 percent of builders in the survey, followed by programmable thermostats at 86 percent (**Figure 1**).



It's perhaps surprising that programmable thermostats aren't even more common given their low cost, especially when compared to items like windows and HVAC systems. Anecdotally, several builders have reported that a small but discernible share of their customers tend to resist devices that require programming.

After the top three items, ENERGY STAR appliances and duct systems designed to minimize leakage are commonly used by well over 70 percent of builders. In the next tier is a cluster of four building products and practices commonly used by 65 to 67 percent of builders. In addition to improving the home's thermal envelope, this group includes three items not directly related to the home's energy performance: moisture control, minimizing material usage, and water-conserving fixtures.

Moisture control qualifies as a green feature, because it results in some components of the home needing to be



# Proofs & Truths



At Symphony at Strathmore, 2012 BALA Platinum Winner by Lessard Design, a high-tech wiring system, Energy Star certification and dual-zone heating and air conditioning deliver comfort-on-command throughout the seasons.

replaced less often, which also reduces environmental impacts associated with manufacturing, transporting and installing those components over time.

For most of the 23 green products in the survey, usage is relatively uniform across geography (the four principal Census regions) and builder size. (Builders were grouped by those who started fewer than 25, 25 to 99, or more than 100 homes the previous year). For example, at least 86 percent of builders in each region and at least 90 percent in each size category commonly install low-e windows.

The exceptions to this uniformity include a couple of green practices

that are more common in the West than in other Census regions. Recycling construction waste, commonly used by 36 percent of builders overall, is commonly used by 64 percent of builders in the West, probably due to state or local recycling requirements or incentives. Passive solar design, commonly used by only 12 percent of builders overall, is commonly used by 24 percent of builders in the West.

There are also a couple of green practices that are more common among large builders. Efficient construction techniques that minimize material usage, a technique commonly employed by 66 percent of builders overall, is commonly used by 82 percent of builders with at least 100 starts.



Solaris at Daybreak, 2012 BALA Silver winner by KTG Group, uses Energy Recovery Ventilation (ERV) which replaces all indoor air with filtered and treated outside air 6 times a day.



Prefabricated components, commonly used by 30 percent of builders overall, are commonly used by 53 percent of those with 100-plus starts.

On the other hand, only 24 percent of builders with 100-plus starts commonly install on-demand water heaters, noticeably fewer than the 39 percent of builders overall. And none of the builders with more than 100 starts reported that they commonly built with re-used or salvaged materials.

Across the list of green items covered in the survey, the use of at least one item is nearly ubiquitous. Ninety-six

percent of builders reported using one or more of them. Builders thinking about certifying their homes to the National Green Building Standard, or otherwise expanding their use of green features in order to attract buyers, may find it instructive to see these NAHB survey results on which specific green products and practices their peers have most often found practical and cost-effective. ▲

Waterfront Hideaway, by My House Design Built Team, is the 2012 BALA Gold Award winner for Green Built Home. The open stairwell, multi-zonal radiant-heated floors, sloped roof and floating island loft all combine to promote natural air circulation and keep a warm and relaxed atmosphere year round.

Paul Emrath, Ph.D. is NAHB's Vice President for Survey and Housing Policy Research.





# Healthy Ever After

By Brooke Fishel

A new low-income rental community makes fitness and good nutrition a little easier for its residents. Here's how.

Morrisania, a poor neighborhood in New York's South Bronx, fits the definition of a "food desert" perfectly. It's one of those places where people have little access to fresh healthy foods—and those who live there have suffered from obesity, diabetes, and related health issues for generations.

So when planning Arbor House, a 120,000 square-foot multifamily building in the neighborhood, Blue Sea Development co-founders Les Bluestone and Avery Seavey saw an opportunity: Why not create a state-of-the-art property for low-income residents that includes amenities to support healthy lifestyles?

Both inside and out, the architectural features of Arbor House give it the appearance of a luxury apartment building. Yet it was developed to meet the affordable low-income rental apartment needs for households earning less than 60 percent



of the area median income in the area (\$49,800 for a family of four).

These households often have little opportunity for the kinds of activities and diet that makes for good health, Bluestone noticed, and he wanted to



change things. "Healthy living was a big thing for us in the design and development of this building," he said.

## STEPS TOWARD EXERCISE

One of Blue Sea's strategies was to encourage the residents to use the stairs more often. So the developer designed the entry so that the stairs, not the

elevators, were immediately visible. Designers opened up the stairwells so they weren't dark and closed off from the rest of the building. They also created special enhancements in the stairwells to make them more pleasant: fire-rated glass doors instead of steel, art displays, attractive lighting, and music. One place these features were purposefully left out? The elevators.

Stairways were just one way the developers created opportunities for

**Above:** Though Arbor House gives the appearance of a luxury apartment building, it was developed to meet low-income rental needs in the Morrisania neighborhood of the South Bronx.

**Center:** Arbor House boasts a fully equipped indoor fitness center and a 10,000 square-foot plaza re-landscaped to include an elaborate fitness path with exercise stations.





A 10,000-square-foot greenhouse on the roof of Arbor house holds a hydroponic farm.

residents to make healthy lifestyle choices. The building also boasts a fully-equipped indoor fitness center and a 10,000 square-foot plaza re-landscaped to include an elaborate fitness path with exercise stations.

“We wanted to provide opportunities for the entire family to get fit, not just the adults,” said Bluestone. While many fitness centers in multifamily buildings restrict use by younger residents, Arbor House made sure it was a place where the entire family could work out and be active together.

“If parents are able to bring their kids

to the fitness center or the outdoor fitness area, they are more likely to work out because they can keep an eye on their children,” Bluestone said. “An added bonus is that when kids see their parents being healthy, they will more likely choose an active lifestyle.” The building meets [New York City Active Design Guidelines](#) to promote physical fitness and reduce obesity.

### CLEAN AND GREEN

Blue Sea also wanted to improve renters’ health by improving air quality in the building, so the developer included a



A 170-square-foot living green wall in the lobby improves air quality and adds to the building’s healthy feel.

170-square-foot living green wall in the lobby that lets plants replace carbon dioxide with oxygen.

Plants play an even bigger role on the building’s roof, where a 10,000-square-foot greenhouse holds a hydroponic



Forty percent of the greenhouse’s produce is distributed within the local community.

farm. The farm grows produce year-round, and 40 percent of what it yields is distributed within the local community. “The South Bronx truly is a food desert,” said Bluestone. “There is very little access to fresh produce for the community. The farm really helps get healthy foods into the hands of the people who need it the most.”

Built to be energy efficient, Arbor House has achieved LEED-Platinum, National Green Building Standard-Gold, and U.S. EPA ENERGY STAR ratings.

While the building boasts many energy-efficient features, it was resident



education that Bluestone became most interested in when designing the building. The developer installed home energy monitors in all of the units so residents can see in real time what the cost of electricity is for that apartment. This gives residents the immediate information they need to make choices to reduce their energy consumption. This is especially important to low-income renters, says Bluestone: “The amount of money that tenants save on their utility bills can make a big impact on their lives.”

**NOT JUST HEALTHY, BUT BEAUTIFUL**

Arbor House was not a simple “design, develop and build” project. Blue Sea Development worked with multiple agencies and individuals, including the NYC Housing Department of Preservation and Development, the New York State Homes and Community Renewal, and local elected officials to realize this ambitious venture.

The developer was able to purchase the property at a below-market price with the agreement that it would make improvements in the neighborhood and give New York City Housing Authority residents preference for renting the apartments.

The eight-story, 222-unit multifamily building consists of 16 studio units, 33 one-bedroom units, and 75 two-bedroom units, with underground parking for 43 cars.



Arbor House’s brick colors, punched window openings, and limestone-colored base blend with the existing neighborhood, while its metal-clad bays add a 21st century look.

Its brick colors, punched window openings, and limestone-colored base replicate the existing rhythms in the neighborhood, while the addition of metal-clad bays and patterned concrete wall panels add a 21st century touch.

Designers took care to give the building the safety elements it needed due to its



The building features artist-commissioned decorative art which is wrought in metal to double as window security and fencing.



location in an urban center, but delivered them in a beautiful and unique way. The building features artist-commissioned decorative art wrought in metal, which also serves as window security, turning their functionality into an attractive, unique visual addition to the building and streetscape. Lush landscaping also surrounds the building, softening its urban setting.

To encourage a sense of community, Arbor House features amenities usually found only in luxury buildings: It offers a resort-style pool and furnished sundeck with lounge area, grilling spaces, a dramatic fountain, and a chic clubroom with a bar, comfortable seating, flat screen televisions, and gaming zone. Arbor House even has a cyber cafe with Wi-Fi access and state-of-the-art equipment, an outdoor fire pit with lounge seating, bike storage with an on-site bike repair area, and a sleek, modern lobby with a stylish waiting area and coffee bar.



Arbor House encourages residents to get everyday exercise by climbing stairs. Elevators are located down a hallway from the lobby, which instead features easy access to the stairs.

Arbor House opened its doors in February of last year and received both a Best in Region and a Multifamily Platinum award in the Best in American Living Awards for 2013 (go to [bestinamericanlivingawards.com](http://bestinamericanlivingawards.com)). 🏡

Brooke Fishel, is a communications consultant in the San Francisco Bay Area.



National Association of Home Builders

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# BALA

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2013 WINNERS SHOWCASE



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This new community provides 36 affordable rental homes in downtown Santa Ana, California. Its design has respect for the rich architectural heritage of Santa Ana, including well-executed Spanish Colonial style.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY APPLIED PHOTOGRAPHY



## PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECT** Bassenian Lagoni, Newport Beach, Calif.

**BUILDER** Advent Companies, San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

**DEVELOPERS** C&C Development, Tustin, Calif.  
Orange Housing Development Corp, Orange, Calif.

**LAND PLANNER** Bassenian Lagoni, Newport Beach, Calif.





**BALA**  
Best in American Living Awards

2013 WINNERS SHOWCASE



COMMUNITY FACILITY WINNERS

**Platinum**

Community Facility

**Lingshui Blue Bay Golf Course / Clubhouse** • *Lingshui, Sanya, Hainan Province, China*

This beach and golf resort, like several others along Hainan's southeast coast, supports China's economic initiative to expand international tourism. The resort utilizes a sustainable energy strategy with extensive use of folding glass walls that create a shaded, open-air dining space.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LI WEN



#### PROJECT TEAM

<b>ARCHITECT</b>	Dahlin Group Architecture Planning, Pleasanton, Calif.
<b>BUILDER</b>	ZhongTian Construction Group, China
<b>INTERIOR DESIGNER</b>	Design Studio Spin Inc., China
<b>DEVELOPER</b>	Hainan Greentown Gaodi Investment Co., China
<b>LAND PLANNER</b>	JiJing Architecture Design Co., Ltd., China
<b>INTERIOR MERCHANDISER</b>	Hainan Greentown Gaodi Investment Co., Lingshui, Hainan





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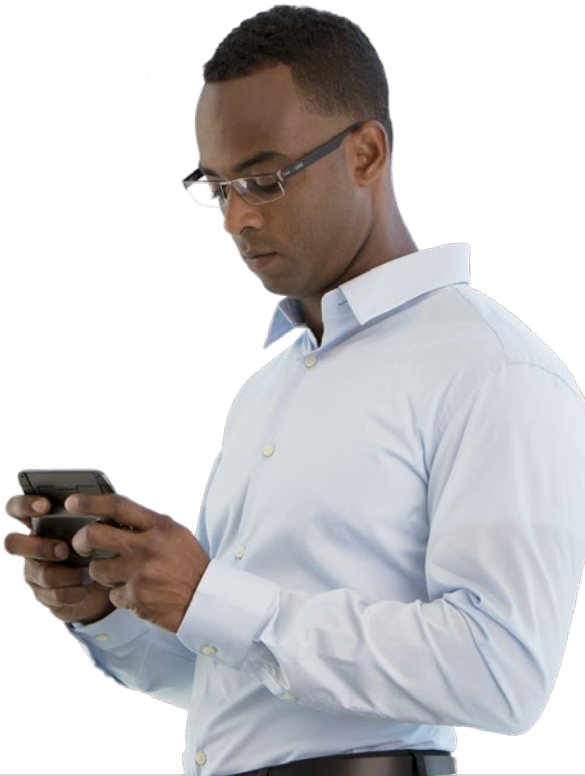
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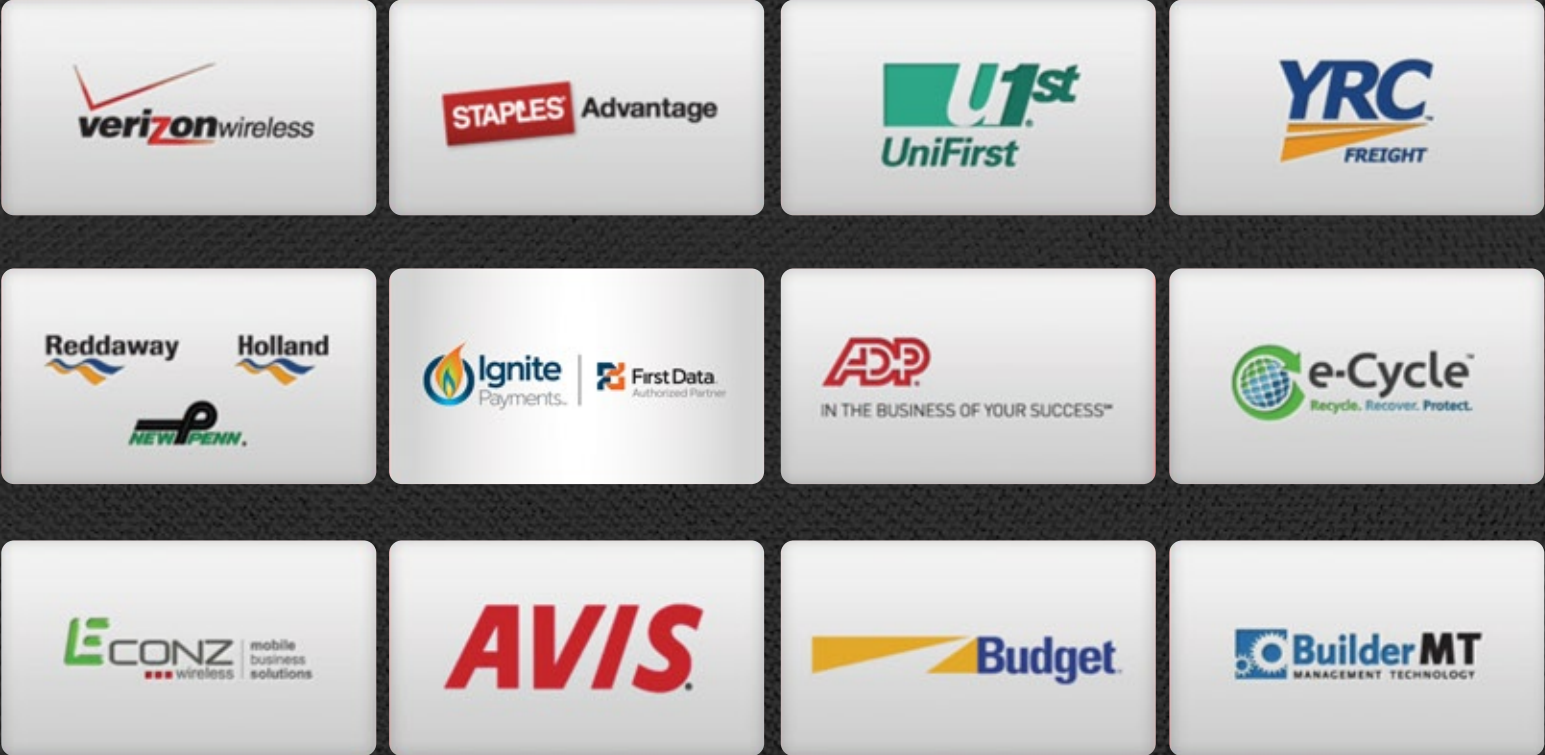
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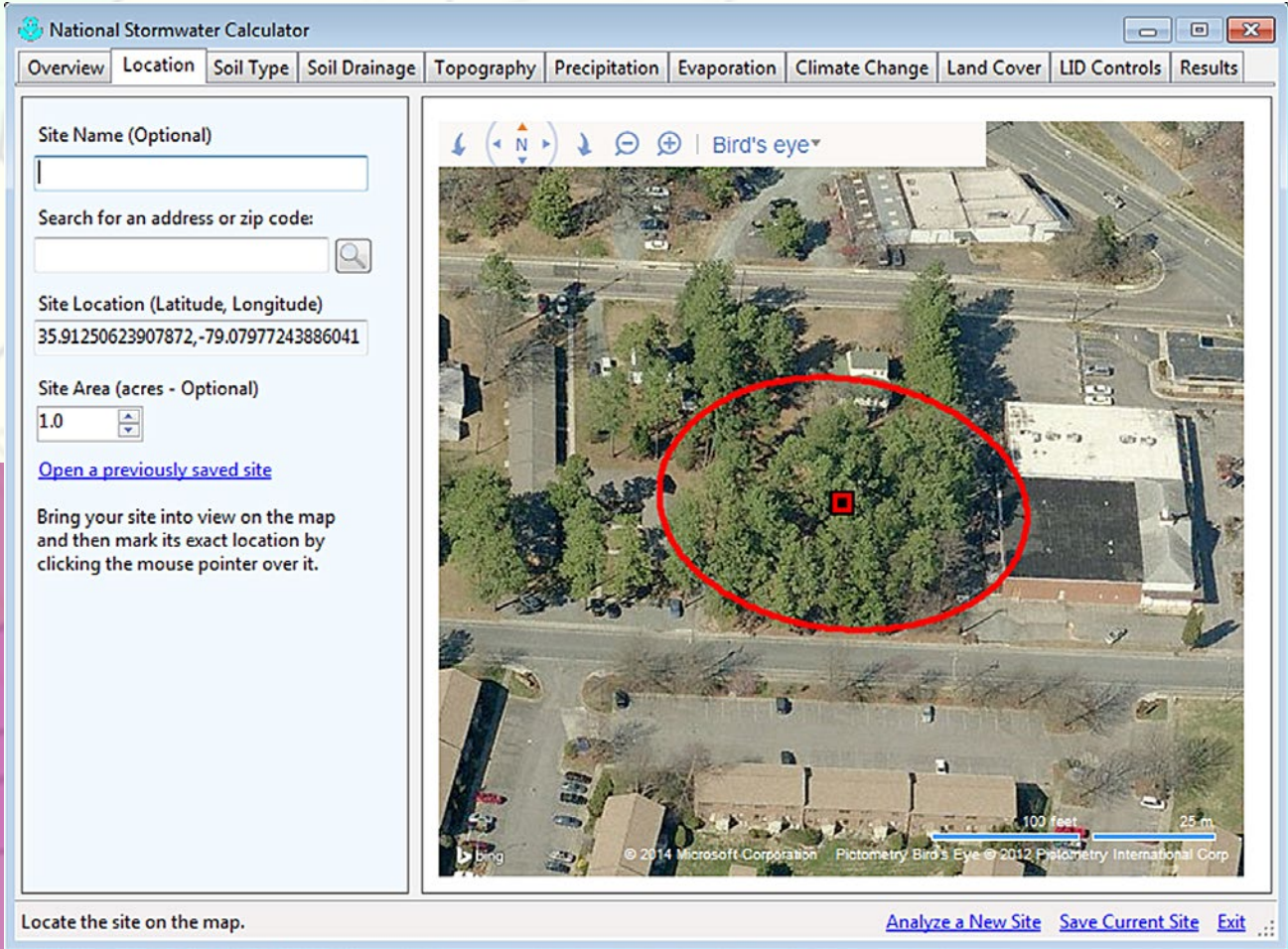




# The National Stormwater CALCULATOR

*A New Tool for Green Development*

By Tamara Mittman



Developers can easily input the site location using latitude and longitude, and the Stormwater Calculator shows its satellite photo.

Stormwater runoff from urban and suburban areas contributes to water pollution, combined sewer overflows, and localized flooding. But a new tool shows developers how green infrastructure changes everything.



In any storm, it's easy to see the difference between a parking lot and a natural surface and their differing effects on water quality. Rain falling on paved areas begins to pool and flow, eventually cascading into streets and storm drains. Rain falling on unpaved terrain, on the other hand, soaks in. While runoff from paved areas carries trash, sediment, and other contaminants into local waters, rain falling on vegetated areas often produces no runoff at all. Stormwater runoff has caused increasing water quality problems for decades, but today there are new tools to help developers and planners reduce runoff from paved areas.

One new design tool developed by the U.S. EPA is the National Stormwater Calculator. It helps planners design with green infrastructure to mimic the natural water cycle. Also known as low impact development, green infrastructure uses soils, vegetation, and/or rainwater harvesting to absorb and retain rainwater. Common practices include rain gardens, permeable pavements, green roofs, and vegetated swales.

The easy-to-use Stormwater Calculator provides estimates of the annual amount and frequency of stormwater runoff from a selected site. Users can input any location within the U.S. and the Calculator will automatically retrieve data about the site's soils, slope, and long-term rainfall and evaporation patterns. Users can then select different development and green infrastructure scenarios to see how those changes affect runoff volumes.

In January of 2014, the EPA released a major update to the tool to include future climate scenarios. The Stormwater Calculator now allows users to incorporate climate projections into their calculations, helping developers plan sites that will remain resilient to future change.

As an example of how the Calculator might be used, consider a developer or municipality



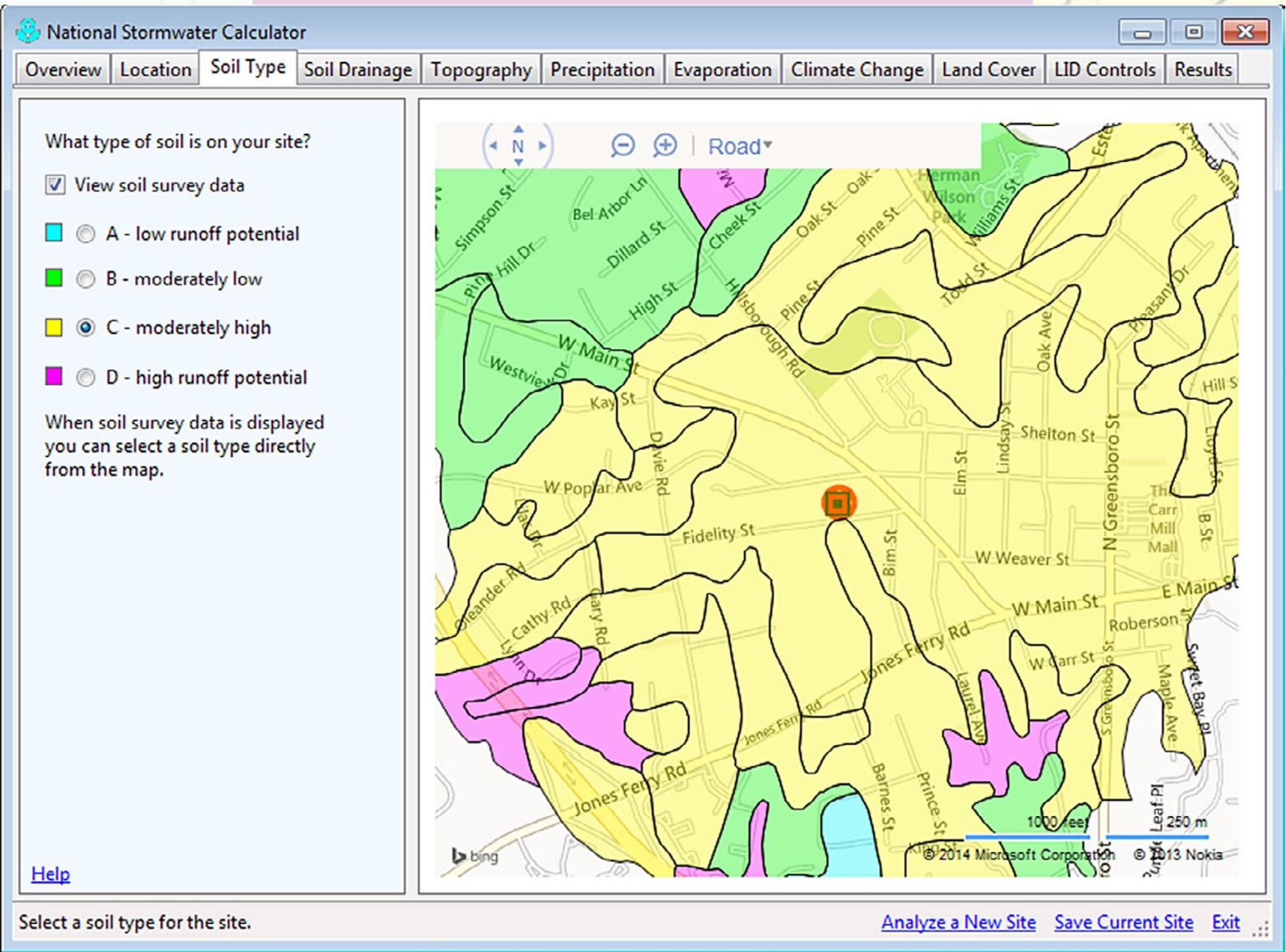
Policy Watch

planning to build a new parking lot on a currently vacant one-acre site. An example site located in Carrboro, North Carolina is shown below. When the developer or municipality enters the site location, the Calculator automatically retrieves data about the site’s soils, slopes, and meteorological records. For example, the soil map generated by the Calculator is shown below. When the developer or municipality adds data about current and future land cover, they find that runoff volumes increase dramatically. In this example, runoff increases from 3.6 inches per year before development to 33.5 inches per year after development. The developer or municipality may then decide to trade some parking spots for green space, incorporate permeable pavement into the design, and add rain gardens along the periphery. In this simple example we assume that 10 percent of the site is returned to forest, half the parking lot is converted to permeable pavement, and half the parking lot drains to rain gardens along the site’s edge. Running this scenario through the Calculator generates the outputs shown below. Runoff volumes are significantly reduced, with only 10 inches of runoff per year with green infrastructure compared to 33.5 inches of runoff per year without.

By considering how a changing climate might impact rainfall and runoff volumes in the future, the Calculator can also help the developer or municipality plan solutions that lower the risk of flooding, expensive retrofits, or other future problems.

For more information and to download the National Stormwater Calculator, please visit [epa.gov/nrmrl/wswrd/wq/models/swc](http://epa.gov/nrmrl/wswrd/wq/models/swc).

Tamara Mittman is an Environmental Engineer at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C.



The Calculator retrieves data about the site’s soils, topography, and meteorological records.



# Waterfront Homes

By Wayne Visbeen

Designing a home is akin to building a puzzle. When it's all put together properly it can be a thing of intricate beauty. When developing a waterfront home there is an additional level of complexity that, when executed properly, can be magical. Views, outdoor spaces, outdoor rooms, prevailing winds, shading, and other details should combine to create a wonderful experience that incorporates the water as an amenity. Often what is really important to a successful waterfront home is what is not seen. These are the details that can be the most significant and enhance the quality of a waterfront experience. 🏡

**Wayne Visbeen** is President of Visbeen Architects in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Chicago, Illinois, and Bay Harbor, Michigan.



## TIPS AND TRICKS

1

Phantom screens should be used to allow waterfront breezes to infiltrate the home.





## What's Changed, What's Stayed?

A look back at BALA winners across three decades provides insight into how American communities—and American values—have changed over time.



For 30 years, the [Best in American Living Awards](#) (BALA) program has provided a spotlight for the most creative and innovative builders, remodelers, architects, developers, land planners, and interior designers in the nation by recognizing design excellence in single-family and multifamily homes of all types and sizes, as well as design excellence in communities, interior design, remodeling and rental developments.

“BALA continues to be a snapshot and a directional for the way forward in home building and design. Something in each year’s winners will help you do your next project better—no matter who you are,” said former BALA judge Heather McCune of Bassenian Lagoni, a multiple BALA-award winning firm. “That’s the power of a program like BALA.”

Just like fashion, home design trends over the decades evolve dramatically—like going from bellbottoms to skinny jeans, or from tie-dye to pin stripes. But designs can also retain some the looks and practices that stand the test of time—much like a classic suit.

A review of the trends from the past 30 years of award winners provides a unique look back at what Americans valued, what technologies were available to us at the time, and how communities have evolved and changed over the generations.

## garages



Making the garage visually recede in a home’s exterior has always presented a challenge. Here the architect has tucked one bay back, and located the garage partially below grade. 2009 BALA Home of the Year, Neathermead Residence, Asheville, N.C.



Multiple bays around a courtyard beneath the main living area significantly reduces the garage’s visual impact. 2013 BALA Silver Winner, Smith Residence, Sullivan Island, S.C.

## Timeless Trends

Let’s first look at a few trends that have stood the test of time:

**Garages:** One thing that hasn’t changed is the prevalence of garages—nor the continued attempts by architects and builders to lessen their dominance in the exterior appearance of the home.

“We have tried continually, over the years, to focus more on human entry, not auto entry,” said McCune. This focus on minimizing the appearance of the garage began in the 1980s, a time when communities were becoming denser and homes

took up less acreage, explains former BALA judge and award-winner Victor Mirontschuk, AIA, of EDI International in New York. “Shrinking the physical size of the garage wasn’t an option,” he said, “so builders and architects had to be more creative to incorporate it subtly into the design of the home.”

Over the years, architects have achieved this in many ways: designing side-entry garages, separating garage bays, cantilevering a second floor out over the garage, or by giving more emphasis to the front door.



Where lot size or alleys allow, side or rear-entry garages make for an enhanced front elevation. 2009 BALA Silver Winner, Traymore, Rose Valley, Pa.



## porches



A wrap-around front porch connects homeowners to the community—and adds irresistible charm. 2013 BALA Gold winner, Branford Plan at Poplar Run, Silver Spring, Md.

Deep double-decker porches offer plenty of shaded space for relaxation. 2004 BALA Platinum winner, Baywood Residence 3, Hercules, Calif.



**Porches:** While architectural styles are varied across the country, one consistent feature that has stood the test of time is the porch. Porches provide an architectural detail that ties homeowners to their communities. Unlike backyard decks, front porches create a connection with others, making not just the house, but also the neighborhood, feel like home.

**Neighborhood Amenities:** Over the decades, builders and designers have continued to include community amenities that allow residents to connect with one another, whether they are homeowners or renters. These features can include walking trails, parks, community centers, and lakes. This trend, too, increased as lots shrunk: “Builders and architects figured out that they needed

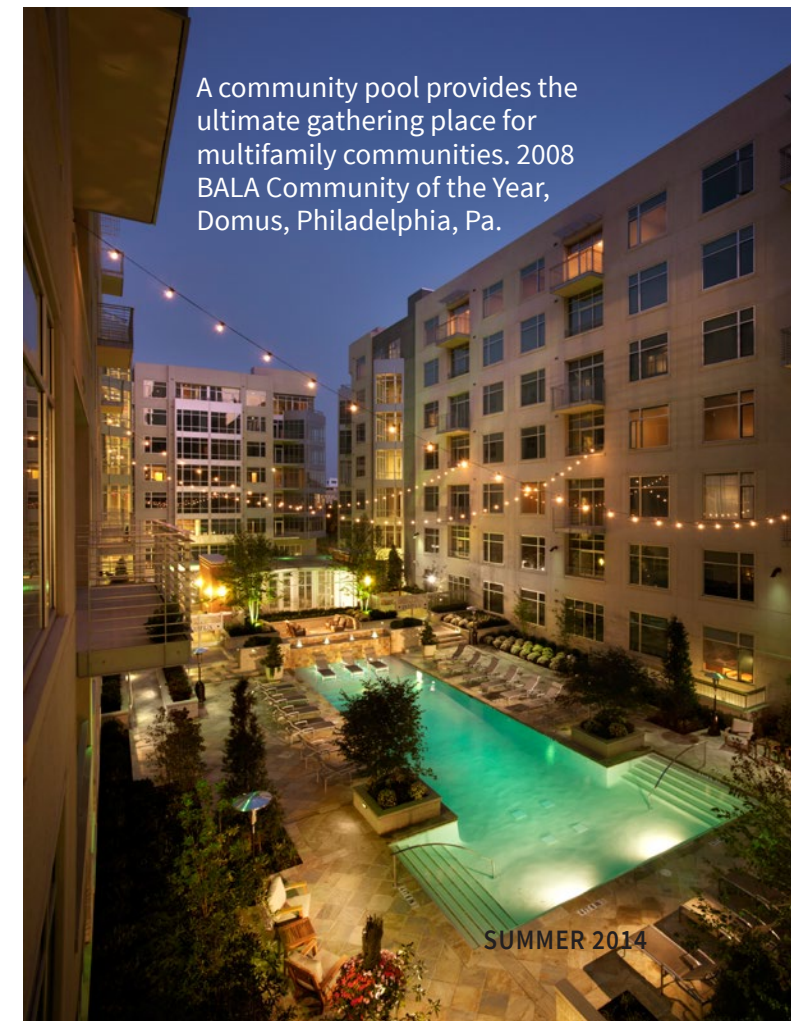


A community fireplace and meandering walking path give these homes a neighborly feel. 2013 Community of the Year, Concord Riverwalk, West Concord, Mass.

## neighborhood amenities

to create gathering spaces in a community and move some of the living to the street,” said McCune. Beyond building community, amenities that get people outdoors promote a healthy lifestyle. “Studies have shown that the number one amenity for buyers is walking trails,” said McCune.

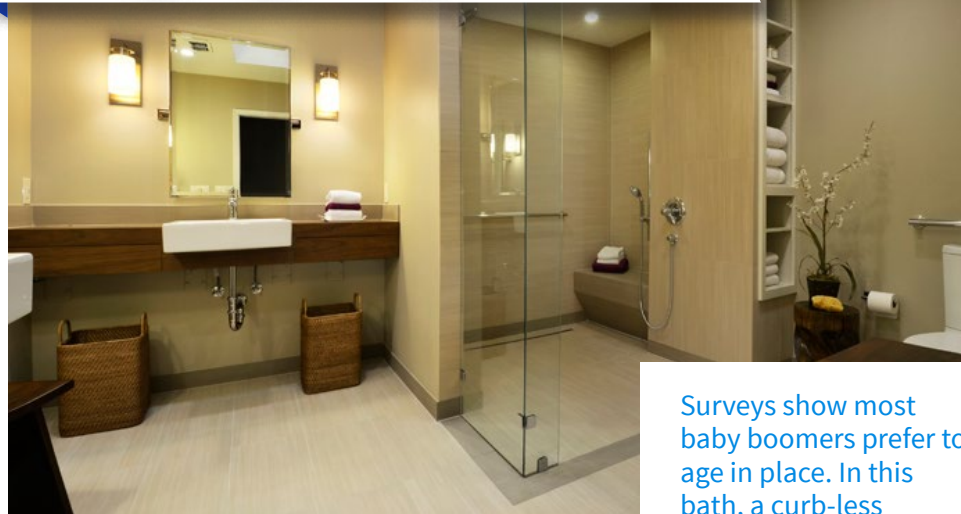
TNDs, or Traditional Neighborhood Developments, are another way planners have attempted to get people walking and interacting within their communities, rather than simply getting into their cars each day. This trend began in the mid-1980s, according to Mirontschuk. “The theory was that you would integrate homes, stores, and



A community pool provides the ultimate gathering place for multifamily communities. 2008 BALA Community of the Year, Domus, Philadelphia, Pa.



## aging-in-place



Surveys show most baby boomers prefer to age in place. In this bath, a curb-less shower, raised water closet and subtle grab bars allow owners to stay in their home, even as their mobility decreases. 2012 BALA Platinum winner, Crest Ridge, Austin, Texas.

offices together in a community, so there would be commercial businesses next to residential homes, with parks and other amenities that make it convenient for the residents also included.”

**Aging-in-Place:** Mixing services and amenities—stores, the post office, the community center—also creates convenience, allowing people to remain in their home as they age.

Aging-in-place is a concept that has existed throughout the BALA awards but has increased significantly since baby boomers began retiring in large numbers. As they age, boomers prefer to stay in their homes and be able to do so as comfortably and easily as possible.

Thus, builders and designers have increasingly begun to incorporate what are called “universal” design features. These include things like wider doors for the possibility of a wheelchair, master bedrooms and baths on the main floor

to reduce the need to use stairs as residents age, and handrails and door levers that fit with the home’s design but also provide security and ease of use for older generations.

Remodelers are also using these same concepts to retrofit older homes to be more suitable for aging homeowners’ special needs.

**Lifestyle Layouts:** Another trend consistent among the BALA winners is open floor plans and more informal spaces in the home.

This wide open kitchen flows into the great room/dining space—a big change from the separated formal dining and living spaces of years ago. 2013 BALA Gold winner, Slope Six, Park City, Utah.

## lifestyle layouts

“Houses built more than 30 years ago were based on family traditions. The dining room was very important for special occasions, but the rest of the time it was largely unused,” said Mirontschuk. “Today that is not as important. People are more informal now, so a lot of houses don’t have formal dining or formal living rooms.”



A two-sided fireplace subtly defines the living and dining spaces in this home, allowing the rooms to flow together easily. 2013 BALA Silver Winner, The Portland, Fort Mill, S.C.





## classic exteriors

This classic exterior incorporates steeply-pitched gables and masonry in the Colonial Revival style. 2012 BALA Platinum winner, Warren, East Grand Rapids, Mich.

McCune agrees. “The living room is officially dead,” she said. “Buyers don’t want formal living spaces. They want a home that truly focuses on how the family actually lives in it.” In the many years she served as a judge, she found that no matter what the square footage was, BALA always wound up with a group of winners that celebrated smart living as opposed to labels on a floor plan.

Over time, the full walls separating rooms have come down and have been replaced by half walls, columns or painting details that still define the spaces but allow the rooms to flow together more easily.

**Classic Exteriors:** Even as interiors evolve, home buyers still love classic exteriors. These include authentic representations of classic architectural styles including Tuscan, Spanish, Craftsman, Tudor, Coastal Cottage, Bungalow, Colonial, and the like. “Each region of the country has architectural expressions inherent to that place. Crafting modern elevations with low-maintenance materials that stay true to a style is key,” said McCune.

## Changing with the Times

While some features in home building and design have stayed consistent over time, advances in technology and changes in lifestyles have produced innovative designs and building practices. Here are just a few of the multitude of changes seen in home design in the past 30 years of BALA award winners:

**Contemporary Architecture and Changing Elevations:** “Contemporary architecture goes in and out of favor with the economy,” said Mirontschuk. “When the economy is getting better, people experiment with more contemporary looks. If the economy gets bad, they transfer back to a more traditional house since it is a safer economic investment.”

He noted, however, that today there is more and more contemporary architecture because of the newer generations of homeowners who favor this look over the more traditional styles.

McCune has seen this reflected in contemporary home elevations, which

have been turned on their heads in recent years. “The evolution and availability of new and unique building materials and designs have helped to produce good elevations with character, authenticity, and timelessness, often at a lower cost.”

Building materials that were not available in decades past are changing

Newer generations of home buyers favor contemporary architecture over more traditional styles. 2012 BALA Silver winner, Solaris at Daybreak, South Jordan, Utah.



## contemporary architecture & changing elevations

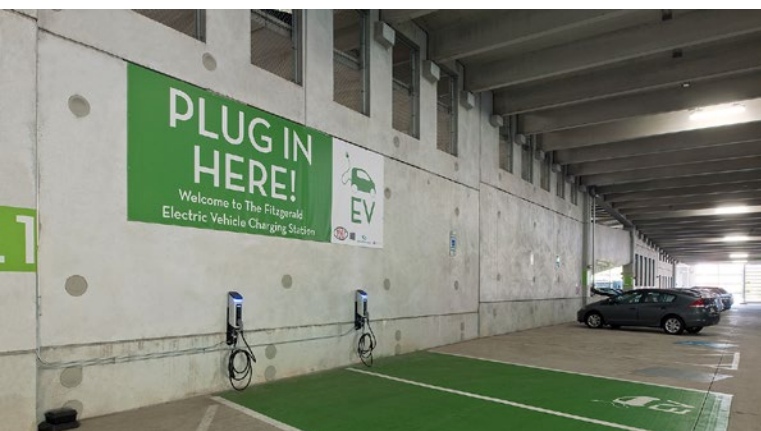


The evolution of building materials means today’s architects can create contemporary architecture with character, timelessness, and authenticity.

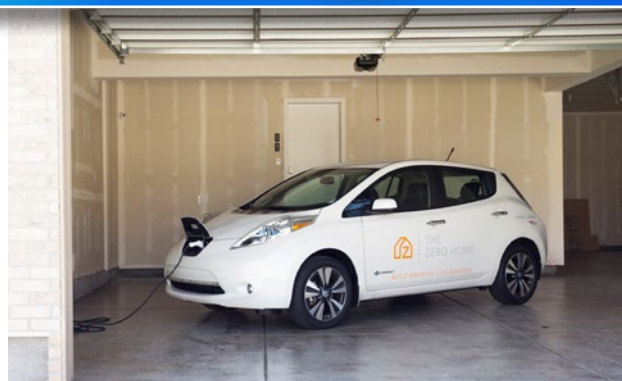
**Left:** 2013 BALA Platinum winner, Alta Verde Coral Mountain J-3, La Quinta, Calif.

**Right:** 2011 BALA Gold winner, The Manor House, Bayside, Wisc.





## technology & building systems



Innovations here to stay: Spaces to plug in electric vehicles and programmable thermostats that show energy spending.

the way that homes are being built and designed. Certain types of moldings, exterior siding, fiber cement siding, and precast elements are just a few of the things that are now being incorporated in the building process. “There are a lot of new and different tools an architect can use to put together an elevation.”

**Technology and Building Systems:** Technology has played a big factor in the advancement of building sciences. The late 1990s saw home owners favoring traditional design and architecture but also the latest amenities. Technology was

wired into the home so the owner could control lighting, security, HVAC and TV all from one central keypad.

With the invention of smart phones and tablets, these can now even be controlled remotely by the homeowner while they are away from the house.

It isn’t just the technology inside the home, but new technologies in production and manufacturing that have changed the way that homes and buildings are being constructed.

Home builders have increased their use of incorporated building systems—such as modular and panelized—to help to cut costs and building time. This became even more prevalent during the economic downturn when budgets were tight and full-time employees were fewer.

**Advancements in Green Building:** The continuous evolution of energy-efficient building sciences is also changing the way builders and architects are designing homes.

An increased emphasis on solar energy and common-sense designs to help with interior comfort, such as low overhangs and shaded windows, started making strong appearances in the early 1990s.

And while energy-efficiency has been a part of home building for decades, the spotlight on green building has been the brightest within the last decade.

“Green and sustainable issues became very important somewhere in the early 2000s...so much so that if the homes required too many resources, it was nearly disqualified,” said Georganne Derick, MIRM, a former BALA judge.

Past BALA judge Kathy Browning of Design Consultants in Virginia Beach, Virginia, agreed that green building has become more prevalent. “Green technology has been integrated more effectively with quality architectural design, and greater care has been taken with traditional planning such as site orientation, tree placement, and window placement for cross ventilation.”



A combination of solar panels and wide porches that shade windows keeps this home energy-efficient. 2011 BALA Silver winner, KB Home Greenhouse, Orlando, Fla.

Passive home design doesn’t sacrifice livability in its pursuit of sustainability, all while maintaining minimal costs increases as compared to a standard home. 2013 BALA Gold winner, Residence Eight, Denver, Colo.



## advancements in green building





### Bigger Kitchens, Smaller Master Baths:

Inside the home, two rooms especially have adjusted to lifestyle changes—the kitchen, and the bath.

Today you will find everyone in the kitchen, making it a larger and greater part of the house's core, according to Mirontschuk. Because of this, kitchens have gotten bigger over the years and are being incorporated more with the family room so as not to separate the person preparing the food from the rest of the family.

This can be seen over time where the kitchen has morphed from galley style with four walls, to a slightly larger kitchen off the dining room, to a great room where the kitchen, living room, and dining room are all one.

As kitchens have gotten bigger, master bathrooms have become slightly smaller. However, the amenities in bathrooms have become more luxurious.

A far cry from the 1950s, today's kitchen is for everyone, and flows into the living and dining areas of the home. 2013 BALA Gold winner, Lincoln Park Luxury, Chicago, Ill.



## bigger kitchens, smaller master baths

**Left:** As kitchens have grown larger, bathrooms have become slightly smaller, though more luxurious and spa-like. 2013 BALA Platinum winner, The Pearl, Sarasota, Fla.

**Above:** Kitchens today are much larger and incorporated into the family room or great room. 2012 BALA Platinum winner, Lakeview Home, Chicago, Ill.



“Everybody wants their home to be like spas, like places they visit on vacation,” said Mirontschuk. He has seen the evolution from standard bathrooms to his-and-her bathrooms, he said, and shared a typical example of this trend: The shower separates two vanities and each spouse had an individual water closet. To allow for this type of individualized space, home owners are sometimes foregoing the bathtub in the master bath.

For resale, however, it helps to have a tub somewhere, which is reflected in the increasing numbers of bathrooms in newer homes.

**Flex Space:** Although the disappearance of formal rooms has been a consistent trend, builders and architects are more recently factoring in flexible living spaces, often called flex spaces, so the home can adapt to the homeowner’s long-term needs as they change.

This is especially beneficial in smaller homes where space is limited and very valuable.

Rooms are being included in floor plans that can change from a nursery, to a home office, to a media room whenever the homeowner no longer needs it for its previous purpose.



Flex space can be changed as the homeowner’s needs change. This playroom boasts a coveted hidden room behind a bookshelf. 2013 BALA Gold winner, Hillside Retreat, Palm Springs, Calif.



## flex space

From playroom for preschooler to game room for teens and adults, this open area at the top of a staircase flexes as children grow older. 2011 BALA Silver winner, PURE 2, Denver, Colo.



## indoor-outdoor living

**Indoor-Outdoor Living:** Outdoor living spaces are no longer just for the areas of the country with nicer climates. Homes everywhere are now incorporating the outdoors to expand usable area for the homeowner.

“The trend started out in California, Texas, and Florida where weather is warmer year-round,” said Mirontschuk. “It has only been fairly recently, within the last 10 years, that it has taken off in other parts of the country, not just in the temperate climates.”

Outdoor rooms—like plumbed outdoor kitchens with stoves and grills, seating areas with fireplaces, and spa retreats—provide a creative and unique way to extend the homeowner’s living space. Browning noticed these rooms had increased exponentially in the BALA entries for 2010 over previous years she had judged.

These days, outdoor living spaces are popular in every part of the country. 2011 BALA Platinum winner, Siena at Laguna Altura, Irvine, Calif.

Plumbed outdoor kitchens with stoves and grills, seating areas with fireplaces and spa retreats extend the homeowner’s living space. 2013 BALA Platinum winner, Alta Verde Coral Mountain J-3, La Quinta, Calif.





## increase in multifamily & rental properties



Both empty nesters and younger generations without kids want urban lifestyles close to work, restaurants, and cultural amenities. 2011 BALA Platinum winner, Primera Terra, Los Angeles, Calif.



**Increase in Multifamily and Rental Properties:** Mirontschuk has seen a jump in the number of renters, whether renting by choice or necessity. Accordingly, the number of rental properties has exploded around the country, including a major increase in multifamily units.

“This trend has created a rejuvenation of urban areas across the country,” he said. This is in large part due to younger generations without kids, as well as empty nesters who want an urban lifestyle close to work, restaurants, and cultural activities. Builders and architects are taking note and including the same high-end amenities and top design trends used in the single-family market. Browning found that many of the multifamily entries she judged just a few years ago showed very creative and contemporary solutions for rental properties that fit with Generation Y, who prefer cleaner and edgier design, finishes, and furnishings.

Multifamily rental properties are rejuvenating urban areas across the country. Generation Y renters prefer cleaner and edgier design, finishes, and furnishings. 2013 BALA Gold winner, AVA H Street, Washington, D.C.



Condominium builders are including high-end amenities and design trends to appeal to childless couples of all ages. 2012 BALA Gold winner, Foundry Lofts, Washington, D.C.

## What's Next?

As the past 30 years of trends from the Best in American Living Awards show, builders, architects, designers and homeowners can count on two things: the classics will endure, but new trends will come along as time, styles, and technology change.

“Good design is timeless, and the solutions have been evolutionary rather than revolutionary,” said McCune. “BALA continues to provide the type of inspiration that will drive the next generation to make homes even better.” ▲

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