

5 Recommendations When You Consider Building an Alternative Green Home



There are two ways to create an energy-efficient house: 1) Make energy upgrades to your house and appliances, or 2) build one from scratch.

Whether upgrading your home, or building a new one, the recommendations below will give you some things to consider when planning your alternative green home.

1. Verify the Materials Your Builder Uses

Everyone talks about using eco-friendly materials in new constructions, but how will you know that's what your builder is using? Don't just take your builder's word at face value. Ask them for a list of materials they're going to use to build your home. Then, research those materials to find out if they're truly environmentally friendly.

Before you hire a builder, discuss your eco-friendly preferences with them and find out which building materials they will use. As an example, consider airborne allergens, mold, mildew, and toxins that wood framed homes often have. If they aren't willing to work with eco-friendly materials, look for a builder who is. As more consumers demand sustainable building options, we can expect a corresponding growth in builders who use them. You may consider concrete as an alternative.

2. Be Willing to Pay for Energy Efficiency

While the majority of people build green homes to save money, some people do it strictly to reduce their impact on the environment. There's no right or wrong reason to build an energy-efficient house, but be clear on how far you're willing to go to save money and reduce your impact on the environment.

For example, will you give up running hot water in favor of a gravity shower out on the deck? Will you make your home so green that it doesn't use any energy at all? Will you get out your rocket stove to cook all your meals? Where will you draw the line?

You don't need to sacrifice modern comforts to save money and increase energy efficiency. Instead of eliminating a water heater to save money on electricity and water, consider installing a propane tank in your yard and hooking up a propane-powered water heater.

Michael Bluejay, known as "Mr. Electricity," has spent his entire career analyzing energy use to determine the cost savings of each type of water heater. Bluejay says gas water heaters are almost always cheaper than electric, but installing a solar water heating system is the best option. A solar heating system will pay for itself in seven years.

Although solar water heating systems and solar panels will cost you more up front, it will pay for itself over time. Going green is an investment that takes time to mature. Be willing to spend the money necessary to build a comfortable, green home.

3. Find Energy-Efficient House Plans

Despite the growing popularity of "going green", green homes aren't abundant on the market. Most new construction isn't green, but sustainable homes don't all have to be expensive to build when compared to standard homes. As more new home buyers ask for green homes, builders will begin to prioritize eco-friendly plans which is going to grow the number of green homes everywhere.

Today's smarter builders are offering eco-friendly house plans, and it's becoming more common. There are many resources that provide plans which consider the environment by using natural resources, recycled materials, and advanced concrete technologies. The designs are simple and make use of all the space in the home. For instance, many plans feature large windows that take advantage of the sun's natural light and heat as well as advanced insulation systems.

4. Go Directly to an Energy-Efficient Builder

Some builders have partnered with organizations like Passive House Institute to build verified energy-efficient houses. Programs verify homes are at least 40 to 50 percent more energy efficient than typical new homes. Partnership requirements are strict, so you can be sure you're connecting with experienced energy-efficient builders.

To find a builder who can create a green, energy-efficient house from your plans, contact info@structuratechnologies.com. Structura Technologies Partners provide end-to-end solutions that involve all the teams you will need, including sub-contractors; training partners; architects; designers; and construction technology/innovation partners.

5. Consider Key Advantages of Green Concrete Homes

A portion of America is realizing that building homes with wood is not necessarily the most sustainable method of residential construction. As mentioned above, wood has its health issues due to moisture which is ever present. Houses built with wood cannot survive the high winds of tornados and hurricanes like resilient concrete homes do. One of the most important advantages of concrete homes is their ability to withstand fires. Because of these wind and fire factors, insurance companies offer reduced rates to concrete home owners.

Historically concrete homes have always had higher up-front costs compared to wood homes. But due to the rising cost of wood in 2021, new concrete home construction cost effectiveness is comparable and can be less. And when considering the long term, they are very low maintenance, thereby extremely practical in saving on repair costs for the life of the home.

Concrete can be formed to meet design specifications of most designers and architects so aesthetically pleasing achievability is very easy. The construction process to build well insulated concrete homes is very fast and concrete shells for homes can go up in days not weeks.

Green Is Going Mainstream – Slowly but Surely

New green home construction isn't the standard yet, but the day is coming when it will be. Until then, it's up to you to source the right builder, the most efficient and sustainable materials, and modify traditional systems as you see fit to get your energy-efficient house.