

# Designing Green

By Paul Pellicani

The general public is constantly being encouraged to “go green,” but without any real incentive to do so. Bombarded with the ethereal message to *save the planet* — and the countless ways to do so — people are being asked to change their way of doing things and invest time, effort and money in this larger-than-life campaign. But most don’t fully understand some of the direct benefits that going green will have on *their* lives. Are people responding to these messages? Not entirely. Are we, the building community, responding?

Knowing full well the vast and profound benefits of building green, the time has come for us to assume our role in the greening of Long Island. We can affect the way customers do things if we each make a commitment to helping our clients understand that building green will yield various positive outcomes for homeowners and for the community.

What needs to be emphasized in the successful sell-through of green goods and services is how the environmental paradigm also contributes to the quality of our daily lives: improved air quality, optimal thermal and acoustical environments. These ideal conditions are what should drive our design and building initiatives. The notion of enhanced occupant comfort, improved health conditions and the reduction in energy costs leads to enhanced asset value and economic benefit. Then there are tremendous social ramifications of building green and setting a positive example in the community. Green buildings are more attractive to prospective buyers. Eco-friendly homes are viewed as welcomed and responsible additions to the community.

It has become standard in our initial client consultations to introduce some of today’s best green-design concepts into the programming phase of a project, even where a client isn’t at all thinking in that direction. The challenge and responsibility we face is to further educate, encourage and help clients overcome doubts about investing in more expensive upfront costs, despite the savings realized later on.

Not only is convincing a client that “green is good” the right thing to do, it is becoming mandatory in a growing number of municipalities. Now, with more local townships pushing green-building codes, the public is increasingly aware of how getting LEED certification is something to factor into the project plans and budget. And we should have on hand for them the list of financial incentives for effective green design, including rebates for renewable energy systems and tax credits and deductions on both the federal and state level. According to Joe Rocco, Assistant Program Manager of LIPA’s Commercial Construction program, “Any architect considering or pursuing residential or commercial LEED certification for their clients should ask LIPA to be part of their team.”

Recently, in discussing a very large, high-end residential project with one of our clients, we suggested incorporating green design and the question was, “We don’t even recycle, why should we add green design?” The reply was simply, “Why not?” followed by a list of the incentives that will benefit them not only during their occupancy but for resale value as well. That simple conversation has launched a

new direction of thought for the overall design and a more positive outlook on the project as a whole. While many consumers may consider green design to be “contemporary,” it should also be clarified that the technology can be incorporated into any style home. We have completed both traditional and contemporary style projects that have incorporated several green features such as recycled newsprint insulation, passive tubular skylighting and geothermal heating, all of which are “behind the scene” applications.

In listing out and presenting the very many health, economic, community and, oh yeah, environmental benefits to building green, both commonsense and dollars-and-cents come into play. Thinking green can be second nature to developers, architects, builders and end-users alike, enabling us to draft a plan for a winning outcome across the board, now and for the future.

*Paul Pellicani has been teaching and practicing architecture for over 20 years and is the founder of architect’s LOFT, an award-winning, published, full-service residential and commercial design firm. Reach him at [www.architectsloft.com](http://www.architectsloft.com). ■*



## advertisers' index

American Eagle Fence.....	17
Barry Block.....	11
Homestead Window Treatments.....	Inside Back Cover
Intelligent Systems.....	3
Little Fish Design Studio.....	13
SL Mason & Landscaping.....	Inside Front Cover
Think Kitchen.....	Back Cover