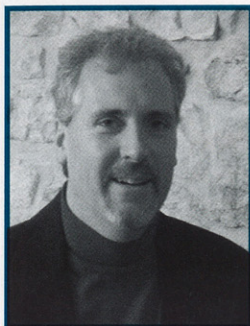


Green Isn't as Hard as it Seems



By David V. Hartke, AIA, MBA
LEED Certified Designer
Stampfl-Hartke Associates, LLC

As any psychologist will tell you: humans are not comfortable with change. It follows then that an industry-wide paradigm shift such as sustainable or 'green' development is met with more than a fair amount of skepticism.

In reality, the effort involved in building green communities is much less complicated than it first appears. In fact many local builders are already using sustainable strategies without taking on sustainability as a priority.

In some cases, green development tactics are achieved by reacting to a tightening inventory of buildable land. As local governments react to their constituents' demand that farms and other non-developed land be protected, builders have turned toward sites that were previously overlooked. These new 'opportunities' include infill lots, the re-use of existing developed lots, brownfields, and a move toward urban and urban-like properties.

For example, Granor Price Homes is currently building out the commercial portion of an urban, mixed-use property called Lantern Hill in Doylestown Borough. The development includes 117 single-family attached and detached units along with nearly 60,000 square feet of mixed retail and office space. The community attains the home-town feel of a walkable-community due to the balance in the scale and relationship between the homes, the sidewalks, and the streets.

From a green aspect, the community uses higher density to achieve greater open space than is expected in an urban-like setting. The residential homes are located adjacent to the development's residentially-scaled commercial buildings and provide a synergy between the homeowners and what will most likely be smaller family-run businesses. The proximity of this community to the existing borough's mass transit, schools, retail, and even commercial space promote many of the tenets of sustainable design.

Another Bucks/Montgomery builder, Westrum Development has turned its focus toward the big city. The previously suburban developer recently completed 230 units in a private South Philly residential development named "Capehart". The community, like Lantern Hill, is a walkable community within blocks of the Broad Street Subway line. Capehart resides on one of the city's current bus routes and only minutes away from Philly's airport as well as many major vehicular commuter arteries.

The community's proximity to public transportation and shopping are key aspects of green design, but Westrum also employed additional green strategies that flowed naturally from the fact that the site was an adaptive-reuse project. The civil engineers re-used the site's existing water and sewer infrastructure and increased open space with wildflower lowlands that both minimized stormwater runoff and provide increased aquifer recharge. Even the architect's design of the individual townhomes supplied each homeowner with sizeable amounts of green space such as lawns and decks that add to the site's overall recharge capabilities.

The concept of sustainable or "green" design includes the entire development process from site selection right through

building maintenance. However, the most critical aspect is addressed during site selection and site-plan design. The examples highlighted within this article describe truly green techniques that were not chosen because of their green policies. Instead, these strategies were adopted because of the developer's reaction to a market transformation caused by the ever-decreasing availability of sizeable tracts of undeveloped land.

There are now 26 builder associations across the country including Colorado, Texas, Washington State, California, New York State, and North Carolina that have developed independent green building programs. These programs offer voluntary standards by which builders can provide higher-performance, green buildings that are also environmentally friendly. They also present builders with an opportunity to demonstrate to the public that homebuilders are part of the community at large as well as partners in our nation's move toward a cleaner, safer environment. As Jim Moulton wrote in his President's Message: "we live in our community and we want the best for it".



Brendan Boroski
BBA Advertising

Because You Need To Know
Where You Want To Be...

- BBA New Homes Directory
- BBA New Homes Directory Adult 55+
- NewHomesBBA.com
- HBA Newsletters
- Advertising Agency Services

320 North Broad Street, Doylestown, PA 18901
215.345.4190 - Outside PA: 1.800.982.5381 - Fax: 215.345.5569
e-mail: ads@boroskiadvertising.com

www.newhomesbba.com