

Defining Green Building

This term gets bandied about quite a bit and it is worth offering specifics if not necessarily coming to full agreement.

Green buildings ARE:

- *Energy efficient* – in terms of building operation and also the energy embodied in building materials
- *Water efficient* – both indoors and out
- *Resource efficient* – in terms of efficient use of both interior and outdoor space; building materials use and the recycling/reuse of both surplus and construction waste
- *Safe* - in terms of indoor air quality and the use of materials more friendly to local and global ecosystems
- *Resilient* – durable and capable of serving occupants during emergencies and severe weather events

In summary, green buildings are high performance, achieving this by design, in construction, and during operation/occupancy. This “360°” high performance can be achieved in new construction and in the retrofit of existing buildings, as well.

Green buildings ARE NOT:

- Inherently expensive or just for the wealthy
- Exclusively utilitarian or ugly
- Confined to any particular program or building type
- Restricted to buildings made of strawbales, rammed earth, or old tires...