

Today's New Homes

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Builders go for the green

Eco-friendly materials, designs becoming more popular and common

By Marcy Marro
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With today's emphasis on the importance of using the natural environment wisely, home design is evolving constantly in ways that are making homes more comfortable and more energy-efficient. Here are some green communities and builders around Chicagoland that are building green for a healthier environment.

A tranquil green roof sky gardens and a well-designed energy-efficient building are some of the amenities at Optima Old Orchard Woods.

"The 'green' characteristics of a building should be an integral part of a design process that flows from the purpose and optimal function of the building," said architect David Hovey. "These buildings are designed for people, and their comfort and sense of well-being is of great importance."

"Green roofs have many environmental benefits," Hovey said. "They cleanse airborne toxins; recycle nutrients back into the atmosphere; re-oxygenate the air; provide storm water management; protect the roofs from ultraviolet light; reduce noise

transmission into the building; increase the energy efficiency of the building; and decrease temperatures in urban heat islands. All of these benefits are in addition to the relaxation and sense of peace that residents enjoy when using them."

Prices start at \$255,000, and incentives are offered on condos for 60-day closings. Call 847-583-4700 for voice mail at any time, or visit optimaweb.com.

In Evanston, Winthrop Club is close to becoming the first residential high-rise in the Midwest to earn LEED Gold certification. The finishing touches are being put on the first wave of condominiums in



Styczynski Walker & Associates recently built a home in Elmhurst that is certified gold according to NAHB Green Building Program standards.

preparation for first move-ins in June.

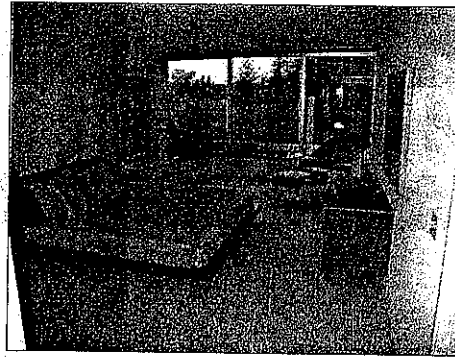
"Three years ago, when we announced we would bring a LEED-certified residential building to downtown Evanston many people dismissed the idea of green residential buildings as just a fad," said Bob Horner, co-principal of Evanston-based Winthrop Properties. "But I think everyone would agree that green homes are even more desirable today than they were in 2006. Sustainable living has become a way of life for a majority of the population."

"As anyone who tours this building can attest,

fine finishes and upscale amenities can be part of a green lifestyle," said co-principal Ibrahim Shihadeh. "And it's not too late for people to enjoy a sustainable home at Winthrop Club. While our penthouses units and some of our largest residences were the first to go, there is still a good selection of homes available with very attractive pricing."

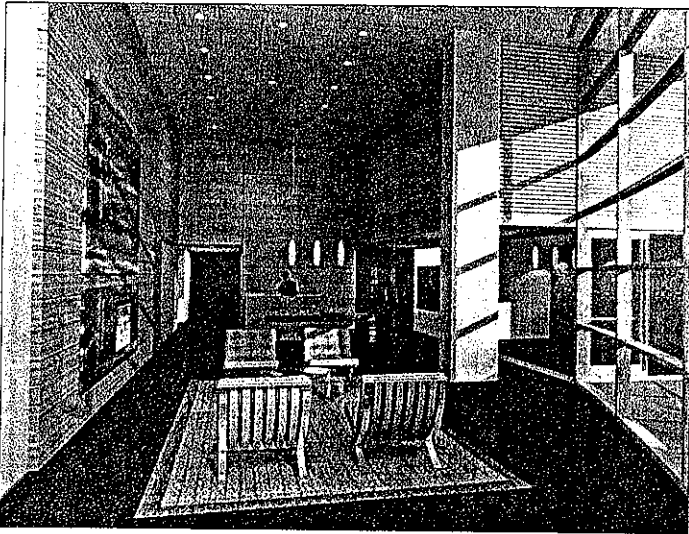
Winthrop Club will earn LEED credits for diverting 75 percent of construction waste from

Turn to GREEN, 4.



Optima Old Orchard Woods in Skokie (above) offers residents green roof sky gardens and energy efficiency in building designed by nationally acclaimed architect.

Focus on home-centered entertainment and "green" living influences design decisions for custom home buyers, says Jeff Samuels, president of Samuels Homes, a North Shore custom builder. Photo shows a home office (left).



First move-ins are expected to take place this June at Winthrop Club, the Midwest's first residential high rise to earn Gold LEED certification.

Green

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landfills, using 20 percent regional materials and 10 percent recycled materials. The building will also have a green roof landscaped with native plants to help mitigate the urban heat island effect and reduce storm water run-off.

Winthrop Club offers 96 condominiums with one to three bedrooms and one to 3½ baths, with base prices ranging from \$329,000 to \$1,859,000 with parking included. For more information, call 847-328-4700 or visit www.winthropclub.com.

According to North Shore custom builder, Jeff Samuels, president of Samuels Homes, custom home builders and buyers are meeting the challenge of creating more lavish and convenient home environments while balancing a desire to participate in protecting the natural world.

"The desire to protect both the environment and the budget by spending more time at home is becoming an increasingly attractive idea, and custom home buyers are adding even more features and conveniences to complement a variety of activities," Samuels said.

"As a custom builder, Samuels Homes shares the excitement of our clients as we discover the constantly changing menu of new products and innovations that can make our clients' homes more fun and comfortable places to live, work and play while respecting and preserving the environment," Samuels said. For more information, call 847-480-6476.

Styczynski Walker & Associates can design and build a custom-designed green home anywhere in the Chicagoland area. In Elmhurst, it built a new two-story home that has received LEED Gold as part of the National Association of Home Builders' Green Building Program. The four-bedroom, 2,550-square-foot home is 51 percent more energy efficient than the 2003 International Energy Conservation Code and includes a variety of amenities designed to reduce heating and cooling costs, increase comfort and put less stress on the planet.

These include:

- Recycled content building materials, such as cellulose insulation
- Materials made from renewable resources, including bamboo floors, special lumber and plywood sheathing
- Water-efficient toilets, faucets and other show-erheads
- Energy Star-rated appliances, ceiling fans and exhaust fans
- A 200-square-foot unshaded roof area for future solar panels
- Low VOC interior paints, sealants and adhesives
- No added urea formaldehyde in doors, cabinets and other similar products
- Motion detectors in the upstairs bathrooms that trigger a hot water circulation pump when someone enters the bathroom, thereby providing hot water on demand while reducing water and energy consumption.

For more information, call 630-789-2513 or visit www.swa-architects.com.