



Green Building At Vantage of Palo Alto

What is Green Building?

Homebuyers are increasingly aware of the impact of building practices on the health of the occupants and of the environment. Concerns about building quality, health, quality of life, energy costs and dwindling natural resources has led Warmington Homes to embrace "green building" practices at Vantage of Palo Alto.

Green building means improving on standard building practices to create homes that will last longer, cost less to operate, won't harm people's health and will not put undue stress on natural resources. By protecting our natural environment and improving the built environment we are helping people, communities and ecosystems to flourish today and in the future.

A fundamental goal of green building is to create "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" (The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development)

Green building has four fundamental objectives:

Conserve Natural Resources

Conventional construction consumes large quantities of natural resources, including wood, metals, fossil fuel based plastics, water and other materials. Many of these resources are unnecessary and end up as waste in a landfill. By utilizing efficient design and construction methods and appropriate materials, especially those with recycled content, durability is increased, waste is decreased and the stress on natural resources is reduced.

Use Energy Wisely

Rising greenhouse gas emissions and energy supply concerns are two serious problems facing the world today. Strategies for reducing energy use within the home while also increasing comfort are central tenets of green building practices. Renewable energy is another vital strategy for reducing global climate change and the need for more power plants, and each home at Vantage of Palo Alto makes a major contribution with a 2-kilowatt solar electric system. These strategies provide the added benefit of lower utility bills over the lifetime of the home.

Improve Indoor Environmental Quality

Air in new homes can be ten times more polluted than outdoor air. Conventional construction practices and building materials, as well as furnishings, are responsible for many of these pollutants. Offgassing of chemicals found in many common building materials introduce pollutants into the home. Green building practices use materials that minimize offgassing of harmful chemicals, prevent mold growth and provide fresh air.

Create Livable Communities

As California's population continues to grow, new development has an ever increasing impact on the infrastructure and land-use planning. Inappropriate development can lead to traffic congestion and loss of open space. Green building creates communities that are more livable, economically viable, healthy and safer.

Does Green Building Make a Difference?

The financial benefits of a green home are easily quantifiable. Lower utility bills can add up to significant savings over the life of the building. As water and energy costs continue to rise this savings will become even more significant. A green home does not sacrifice comfort for energy savings. In fact, by using intelligent design and appropriate building materials and systems, energy savings are realized while comfort is increased.

Quality and durability are cornerstones of a green building. Improved quality and durability reduce the toll on the natural environment due to resource extraction, processing, transportation and disposal. To the homeowner, green building can mean less time and money spent on home maintenance.

Other benefits, such as healthier homes, are not as easily calculated but are equally important. A healthier home has healthier, happier occupants. Reductions in chemical offgassing, mold spores, other biological contaminants and improved ventilation help reduce respiratory illnesses, headaches and other health related problems. Children are especially sensitive to airborne pollutants.

With all the benefits to the homeowner it is easy to overlook the advantages green building offers to the environment and to future generations. Reducing our environmental footprint is an important step in achieving a sustainable future for our planet.

Green Gaining Momentum

Green homes are becoming more commonplace in our communities as homebuyers begin to appreciate the added value to their investment and the beneficial impact on the environment. Approximately 70% of respondents of a 2002 survey of prospective homebuyers indicate that it is essential or very important for new home communities to be developed with green and energy efficient materials and techniques. Green homes make good economic and environmental sense.

Green Features of Vantage of Palo Alto

Each home will be provided with a Homeowner Manual of Green Features and Benefits that helps the homeowner to understand and maximize the performance of their new home. Some of the features found in Vantage of Palo Alto:

Energy Efficient

2.0 kW Photovoltaic (PV) System for Each Home – offsets a significant portion of the electricity bill.

Tankless On-Demand Water Heater – provides instant hot water with higher efficiency.

Lighting Controls – motion sensors to turn lights off in unoccupied rooms and outdoor areas.

Energy Star Dishwasher – minimizes hot water and electricity consumption.

Energy-Efficient Windows – dual-pane, low-e glass.

High Efficiency AC/Heat Pump – 14 to 16 SEER cooling efficiency and environmentally-friendly refrigerant

Water Efficient

Sterling Dual-Flush Toilets – 1.6 or 0.8 gallons per flush, provides opportunity for significant water savings

Resource-Efficient Landscaping – native vegetation requires less water and chemical use and maintains local bio-diversity.

High-Efficiency Irrigation Systems –drip irrigation reduces water use and helps prevent disease and weed growth.

Resource Efficient

Recycled Flyash in Concrete – uses waste product from power plants while improving concrete strength

Engineered Lumber Substituted for Solid Sawn Lumber – better strength and stability as well as a more efficient use of timber resources

Fiber-cement Alternative Siding Materials

Finger-Jointed or Recycled Content Trim – more efficient use of timber resources

Indoor Environmental Quality

Owens Corning Greenguard Pink Fiberglass Insulation -recycled-content, formaldehyde-free

Low/no-volatile organic compound (VOC) Paint

Low VOC, Water-Based Wood Finishes

Low Formaldehyde particleboards

Low VOC Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) for trims, cabinets and entry door

Green Points Rating System [SIDEBAR]

Green Points is a rating system developed by Alameda County, and used throughout northern California, to assess a home's green performance (www.greenpointrated.org). Points are earned by including green best practices into the home with values varying based on the benefit to the homeowner and the environment. A minimum score of 50 is required with at least 10 of these points in each of the categories; Resources, Energy and Indoor Air Quality/Health. For homes that exceed 60 total points "Gold Level Status" is received. Vantage of Palo Alto received 110 total points, far exceeding the Gold level standard.

	Resources	Energy	IAQ/Health	TOTAL
Total Available Points	136	158	63	357
Minimum Points Required	10	10	10	50
Total Points Acquired – Vantage of Palo Alto	31	48	31	110

Green Option Package [SIDEBAR] –

Besides the standard green benefits incorporated into all the homes at Vantage of Palo Alto, Warmington Homes is offering an optional *Green Package of Interior Finishes*. This package includes products with low or no Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) or formaldehyde, helping to improve indoor air quality. Also included are products made with recycled content and with materials that are naturally replenished in a shorter time span. These environmentally friendly products provide superior comfort and performance while reducing stress on natural resources.