



# Environmental Building News™

The Leading Newsletter on Environmentally Responsible Design & Construction

## Welcome!

**W**E ARE PLEASED TO PROVIDE THIS FREE sample issue of *Environmental Building News*—also known as *EBN*. Inside you'll find clear, timely and reliable information on sustainable design.

As environmentally responsible design and construction practices have become more mainstream, the "green" claims have increased. It's getting more and more difficult to tell what's really green, what's practical, and how to apply the practice or product effectively. That's where we come in. *EBN* is written for people like you who are concerned about the impact of buildings on the environment—and don't have the time to spend researching and sifting through the claims. Architects, designers, builders, engineers, planners and others have looked to *EBN* for comprehensive, truthful, and practical green building information since 1992.

At *EBN*, we strive to provide you with the information you need to stay informed without a lot of hype. Just the facts—in a concise newsletter format so you can focus your time on benefiting from the information rather than looking for it!

Alex Wilson  
Founder & Executive Editor

Nadav Malin  
Editor

*"EBN is almost always the first place I hear about new green building developments and I consider it my best and primary resource for sustainable design and construction information."*

— Andre DeBar, AIA, Architect

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- News on notable happenings in the green industry
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# BuildingGreen

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## Modular Home Earns LEED for Homes Platinum

A new home has appeared in Santa Monica, California: a prototype of the first line of modular houses from **LivingHomes®**, Inc., designed by Ray Kappe, FAIA. In August 2006, the home received the first Platinum rating in the U.S Green Building Council's pilot LEED® for Homes.

The 2,500 ft<sup>2</sup> (760 m<sup>2</sup>) prototype, assembled from 11 steel-framed modules, features a 2.4 kW photovoltaic system, solar water heating, and a graywater irrigation system. Natural ventilation provides cooling, while large walls of low-emissivity windows offer daylighting and views while minimizing solar gain. The house makes use of radiant floor heating, perhaps an odd choice for an energy-efficient home, especially in a mild climate (see *EBN* Vol. 11, No. 1). Adjustable walls and modular millwork allow occupants to renovate the space to meet their needs, according to LivingHomes,

Asked how the company's designs for its breezy, open homes would adjust to colder climates, Glenn replied, "Less glass." Elaborating, Glenn told *EBN* that the homes could be manufactured to meet the needs of specific climates, with added insulation around the steel frame to minimize thermal bridging, for example.

Regardless of location, each house produced by the company is designed to achieve at least a LEED for Homes Silver rating, with higher ratings dependent on customer choices. "We believe in the logic of the LEED system," Glenn said of the rating system's flexibility, which allows homeowners to choose which points



*LivingHomes' LEED Platinum prototype modular home in Santa Monica, California, features wood siding certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.*

Photo: LivingHomes, Inc.

they will pursue. In the LEED system, homes over 2,400 ft<sup>2</sup> (730 m<sup>2</sup>), for example, lose points as they increase in size but can gain points by having onsite renewable energy or other optional systems. The prototype, which earned 91 out of a possible 109 points, performed well in the areas of location, sitework, water conservation, and energy efficiency. Many of the systems that support these points, such as the photovoltaic array, will be optional in the coming line of homes. Glenn says that the company encourages homeowners to pursue the highest LEED rating but does not require them to do so.

In one area, LivingHomes goes beyond the bounds of LEED for Homes: the company plans to purchase carbon offsets for the manufacture, installation, and first year of life for each home it sells. According to Glenn, details for the program are still being ironed out. It remains to be seen how close the company can get to Glenn's stated goal of "zero energy, zero water, zero waste, zero carbon, zero emissions."

— *Allyson Wendt*

### **For more information:**

LivingHomes, Inc.  
Santa Monica, California  
[www.livinghomes.us](http://www.livinghomes.us)