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## SHOPPING CENTERS

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### So you want to build a “green” building?

The growing awareness that modern

dependence on fossil fuels is contributing to climate

change. Eileen D. Millett has triggered a new focus on “green” practices. In the U.S., buildings account for 65% of electricity consumption and 38% of green house gas emissions, thus “green” methodologies for design and construction are an obvious strategy for energy conservation. Governmental entities are beginning to require “green” practices through regulation and tax incentives.

What is a “green” building? Ideally, “green” techniques should be incorporated throughout the entire lifecycle of a building, its design, its construction and its operation. “Green” alternatives go beyond renewable energy sources and include multiple building features, such as solar shades to keep buildings cooler but allow light; green grid



Eileen D. Millett

roof systems in which a portion of the roof is

planted; individually ventilated apartments for better in-

door air quality; energy star rated appliances and light fixtures to reduce energy demand; rainwater harvesting systems which funnel water from the roof into storage tanks to be used for irrigation, reducing utility costs and stormwater runoff, among others.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that “green” buildings command higher prices, are more economical to maintain and most importantly, minimize impact on the environment. They are estimated to operate 8-9% more cheaply annually than traditional buildings, although the increase in construction costs could range from 2-11% to as much as 35%. However, one should not just tout a building as “green.” There is a risk of suits from disgruntled buyers or tenants claim-



Susanne Peticolas

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ing that the “green” label is unwarranted. Moreover, the recent explosion of consumer products brandishing the “green” label has captured the attention of the Federal Trade Commission currently in the midst of revising its “Green Guides” for use with environmental marketing claims to deal with false advertising claims.

Although federal, state and local governments are focusing on developing “green” building standards, there is no current universal standard. There are, however, a number of third party certification programs. The U.S. Green Building Council, a non-profit third-party organization offers its LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. Currently available

for both new and existing construction, as well as for commercial and residential buildings, the LEED system quantifies various aspects of a building and awards points for improvements ranging from air quality, plumbing features, energy-efficient appliances, HVAC systems, and use of recycled materials to on-site renewable energy. A minimum number of points is required for certification, higher levels of certification, Silver, Gold and Platinum are offered for more points scored.

Green Globes, owned by Green Building Institute, also rates projects for compliance with environmentally friendly methodologies. It is accredited by American National Standards Institute and is working with

ANSI to make Green Globes an official ANSI standard. The Canadian government uses Green Globes for its entire real estate portfolio.

Climate change experts agree that we have a three-year window to change our infrastructure investments to avoid the warming crisis. So, by all means, go green, but do so with the assistance of a reputable certifying organization and join the battle against global warming.

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