

# green home remodel

{ healthy homes for a healthy environment }





# green

## WHAT IS A GREEN HOME REMODEL?

It's an approach to home improvement with the goal of not only making your home *look* better, but making it *work* better—for both you and the environment. Want a healthier home? Lower utility bills? Reduced maintenance? A cleaner planet? With careful planning, you can create a home that combines beauty, efficiency, comfort, and convenience with health and conservation.

## GREEN & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

A green remodel helps move our region toward *sustainability*. Sustainability is *providing for our own needs, and for those of future generations*. It means thinking about the impacts of our actions now, and years from now. A sustainable community has a thriving local economy, healthy environment, and good quality of life for all. Green remodeling supports this by buying from local businesses, and using goods and services that are non-polluting and respectful of our Pacific Northwest resources. A green remodel can strengthen community ties through an inclusive design process that involves neighbors and others potentially affected by design decisions. Design features such as front porches can encourage social interaction. Greener neighborhoods have food, shopping, and public transit in walking distance, affordable housing, plus plenty of trees and parks. Consider sharing tools, hosting neighborhood tree plantings, and beautifying traffic circles to enhance community in your neighborhood.



Cover photo: VELOCIPEDA architects  
 (photo © Michael Moore).  
 Photo above and right: JAS Design Build  
 (photo © John Granen).

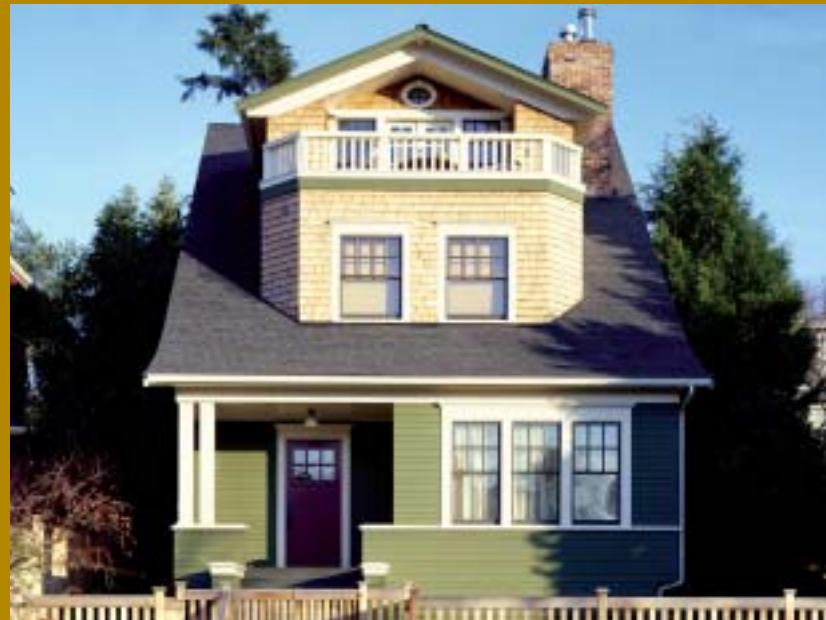
# remodel

If you're thinking about a remodel, you're not alone. Americans spent \$173 billion on remodeling in 2002. Given this level of investment, it makes sense to do things right, the first time. Your remodeling goals may include making better use of living space, adding storage, replacing worn-out features, or simply personalizing your home.

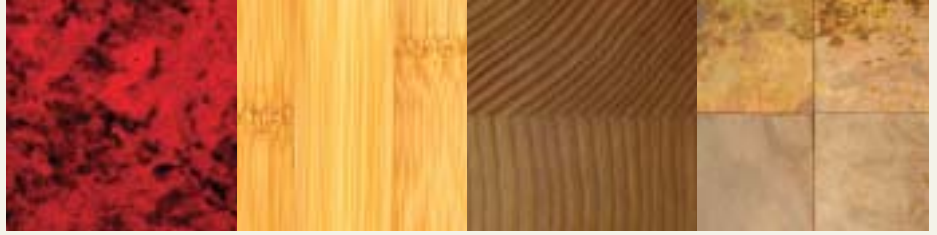
A remodel involves a dizzying array of choices. Help is here! The Green Home Remodel series covers common topics:

- Kitchen
- Bath & Laundry
- Roofing
- Landscape Materials
- Paints & Finishes
- and more!

See [www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding](http://www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding) for more information.



# why



## Why Consider a Green Remodel?

<b>Cost Savings</b>	Energy efficient and water wise designs and products reduce monthly utility bills. Installing a high-efficiency washing machine can save up to \$90 on energy bills and 6,000 gallons of water, every year. The most efficient new appliances typically use 50% less energy than the most wasteful models. Efficient and durable features can last longer and cost less to maintain in the long run.
<b>Health</b>	A green remodel can be good for you, physically and emotionally. Health-focused designs maximize fresh air and natural light, while reducing the risk of injury and asthma. The US EPA includes poor indoor air quality on the list of the top five most urgent public health risks. Levels of air pollution inside a home can be 2-5 times higher than outdoor levels. Using low-toxic materials and good ventilation techniques can help to prevent problems like molds, allergens and poor air quality.
<b>Beauty &amp; Comfort</b>	Inviting and attractive rooms reinforce the comforts of home. Natural materials, high quality lighting, and good design details make for pleasing spaces. Your home can be a refuge from the hectic—and sometimes polluted—world outside.
<b>Added Value</b>	Classic, well thought-out designs keep things from looking dated and hold their value over time. Homes designed to welcome various ages and abilities are marketable to a larger population (a key benefit for resale). And green elements also represent value: 80% of homebuyers say new homes don't meet their environmental expectations, and 96% said they are willing to pay more for a home with green features.
<b>Ecological Benefit</b>	Remodeling is an opportunity to create a home that enhances the environment, instead of depleting it. With your green remodel project, you can be more resource efficient, minimize waste, and recycle what's left over to reduce the amount of materials ending up in landfills. Recycling 60% or more of construction waste is easily attainable in Seattle. By choosing environmentally responsible products, you can protect forests, wildlife, and air and water quality. And, for every gallon of water or kilowatt-hour of electricity you save, you reduce the amount of carbon dioxide (the greenhouse gas) entering the atmosphere.

## What Does a Green Remodel Look Like?

Green homes don't have to look any different from typical homes. This BUILT GREEN™ home remodel (shown at right) in Seattle's Greenlake neighborhood features a variety of elements you might expect to see in a green remodel:

1. sustainable harvest wood trim,
2. recycled wallboard and insulation,
3. proper ventilation,
4. low toxic finish,
5. water efficient faucet,
6. ample natural light,
7. recycled plastic decking (outdoors),
8. healthy paint, and
9. energy- and water-efficient appliances.



Photo right: The Soltner Group and Sunshine Construction.

# project tips

## Do Your Homework

Research helps you ask the right questions of retailers, your designer and/or contractor—and avoid costly mistakes if you are doing the work yourself. The Green Home Remodel series is a great place to start. Next decide where you'll need help. Find professionals with experience designing and constructing green. One resource is the *Northwest EcoBuilding Guild* ([www.ecobuilding.org](http://www.ecobuilding.org)). This nonprofit association maintains the *Green Pages*, a directory of members and the services they provide. With any professional, review portfolios and call references to make sure claims are backed up with evidence. Do this research and planning *before* you move forward with your remodel.

## Expand Your Definition of Cost

Initial price gives only a peephole view of the true cost of a product or design over the lifetime of your home. A low purchase price may mean a good deal, or it may signify a lack of quality or durability. Or it may mean that some environmental, health, or social costs are not included in the price. A higher purchase price can mean a *better* deal in the long run: you can actually reduce the cost of living in your home by choosing resource-efficient fixtures (lowering monthly utility bills) and durable materials (requiring less frequent replacement).

Lenders are beginning to recognize the value of ongoing savings to the homeowner. The savings from a more efficient home can cover and even exceed the incremental addition to your mortgage payment, meaning the improvements pay for themselves, and then some.

## Use BUILT GREEN™

BUILT GREEN™ is a program consisting of more than 250 ideas to make a home healthier, more efficient, and easier on the environment. BUILT GREEN™ has checklists for new home construction, multifamily buildings, neighborhood developments, and remodeling projects. Points are tallied to designate the level of green achieved by the home: ★, ★★ or ★★★. The more points attained, the higher the overall environmental and health performance of the home. The program is new, but growing quickly. Nearly 12% of the homes built in King County in 2003 were BUILT GREEN™.

The BUILT GREEN™ Remodeler Checklist is available from Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties at [www.builtgreen.net](http://www.builtgreen.net).



*Want to learn more? For Green Home Remodel guides, information, financial incentives, and more see [www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding](http://www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding) or call (206) 615-0731.*

*Photo third from top: Environmental Home Center. Photo bottom: Robert Harrison Architects.*



*For TTY assistance, please call (206) 233-7241. This information can be made available on request to accommodate people with disabilities and those who need language assistance.*



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