

# Another Shade of Green



By *Keith Lindemulder*

Following up on the previous “Another Shade of Green”, I received an email with a link to a Newsweek article about green building – “[The Bad News About Green Architecture](#)”. In the article the reporter, Cathleen McGuigan, cynically discusses the current trend of green building apparently not concerned about the current programs available such as LEED-NC and LEED for Homes. I encourage you to read the article yourself.

Throughout the article there are several ideas which are right on and other which are pretty misleading. For example, she points out several green features found on some buildings but suggests that it’s all worthless if people that work in the building have to drive a long way to get there to work. In fact, there are points available in every major program to award buildings which are close to public transportation, have ample quantities of bike racks and even limit the parking spaces to the minimum required by the building code. That doesn’t mean the architect has to incorporate all these features but they’re rewarded for lowering the environmental impact in each way possible on the project by encouraging efficiency everywhere including transportation.

The author makes light of “Green McMansions” suggesting that a green home a marketing exercise or some “cool novelty” a new home owner can enjoy. It’s true that there are a lot of claims of green products and systems which aren’t all they appear. However there are several programs for building green homes currently and at least two “standards” on the way which can ultimately become part of the building code system. The LEED for Home program and NAHB Green Home program both incorporate ‘penalties’ for building large homes. Each make the architect and design team incorporate more and more “green features” to qualify for points. Specifically the more floor space available per occupant, the more energy efficient the house must be.

One bright light in the article talks about the new [California Academy of Sciences](#) museum which just opened to the public this last week. Once certified, it’s expected to earn a Platinum rating from LEED and become the largest museum in the world to achieve Platinum status. It did this by paying careful attention to location, design, energy and water efficiency, material selection and the quality of the indoor space for employees and visitors. Exactly what LEED was developed to do!

The article sums up with the ambition of many in the sustainability business.

To break the stereotype that green buildings must be ugly buildings and to make sustainability features so second nature that we don’t have to hype them anymore. When that day comes, these features will be part of the mainstream and be understood and accepted by the whole supply chain. In the meanwhile, companies like Nucor and Nucon continue to develop and market products that move us toward that goal. In fact it is about function and style and finding a way to give the market what it wants and doing it in a way that is sustainable in every way.

Have a SAFE and Sustainable week!

**Reduce!**

**Reuse!**

**Recycle!**



**STEEL**  
IS THE NEW GREEN.



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