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Resources

enWorks Realty (206-283-8181 or enworksrealty.com) offers a Healthy Home Assessment Package free to enWorks Realty home buyers, or to the public for \$450. It includes an inspection and recommendations that help homeowners prioritize projects to make their homes greener. ... King County's Green Tools Team helps users with technical assistance, grants, hands-on training and information to find locally produced, high-quality sustainable building materials and resources. The program's Residential Remodeling Guides are designed to help users make their homes in the most environmentally sustainable way: metrokc.gov/pswd/greenbuilding/residential/odel.asp.

Property

Seattle architecture firm Olson Kundig will design 13 new plans for buyers of Horizon at Semiahmoo (liveathorizon.com), where the initial phase of development will offer 74 single-family ocean-view homes priced \$235,000–\$495,000. At full build-out, the environmentally conscious, gated community will feature a clubhouse, access to a 300-slip marina, a network of trails and parks, and a 10,000-square-foot retail center, including a boutique organic grocery store, restaurant and other retailers. Horizon at Semiahmoo will be designed to meet the rigorous LEED Gold standard in environmental home design. Thanks to its architectural pedigree, location an hour and a half north of Seattle, and views of the San Juan Islands, Horizon at Semiahmoo is one to watch.

Seahawk's Waterfront Estate

Steve Holmgren recently announced that he will be back as Seahawks coach for one final season before retiring. Steve Holmgren and his wife, Kathy, live in a Kirkland condo and are in the process of selling their home on Mercer Island. Highlights of the property, listed for \$3,949,000, include: 96 feet of western-exposure Lake Washington waterfront; dock; 3,670-square-foot main home with four bedrooms, three baths, heated tile floors, two family rooms, fire-in sound, water-view decks, indoor hot tub and security system; and separate 3-bedroom apartment with three-car garage and water-view deck.



COURTESY BARBEE MILL

green GROWS UP

No longer just havens for hippies, residential and commercial properties are offering habitats for work and home that are increasingly energy efficient and chic

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE FEDER

YEARS AGO, FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE that delivered minimal environmental impact meant living in a yurt or hippie shack. These days, it's getting easier to be green. Ask Bert Gregory, president and CEO of Seattle's venerated architecture firm Mithun, about the future of green real estate, and he'll tell you the laws of supply and demand are changing. "A fundamental shift will happen within the next few years as we start to develop a charge for greenhouse gas pollution," he predicts. "That will impact people's choices in homes."

The state of Washington is part of the Western Climate Initiative that is setting benchmarks to reduce pollution, and Gregory says demand for green real estate is increasing. "What we see with our clients is preparation for this new clean-energy economy. Everyone is getting prepared," he says.

"Green real estate will be the base line for development in the future," Gregory predicts. He believes that more consumers will demand environmentally friendly options as they realize they can make a difference through their own actions. "Market awareness for individual choices is growing," he says, noting that Belltown's Mosler Lofts was 2006's fastest-selling condo project.

Mosler Lofts homeowner Chapin Day and his wife lend credence to this theory. "We were attracted ultimately to the fact that it was green, and we're pleased that it is," Day says.

Located at Third and Clay, the building opened for residency in October 2007. Its green features include low-emitting nontoxic paint, power-saving Energy Star appliances and a rooftop

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recreation area. The building is Built Green and is slated to be the city's first condominium certified as LEED Silver. Mosler Lofts was recently hailed by the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* as "the most interesting and provocative residential high-rise to appear in Seattle since World War II."

Buyers can now find or remodel healthier homes with nontoxic methods, finishes and features, and can end up with energy-efficient dwellings that save money while reducing greenhouse gases. And as proven by the success at Mosler Lofts, green doesn't have to sacrifice chic.

The Green Seal of Approval

Our state is arguably one of the best places in the country to buy green real estate.

"Washington has one of the highest percentages of certified green homes nationwide, and the Pacific Northwest is considered a national leader in both residential and commercial green building," says Aaron Adelstein, executive director of Built Green, a nonprofit program of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties. The association operates a rating system of environmentally friendly building practices for remodeling and new home construction.

In commercial real estate, the "green" designation applies to a growing list of earth-friendly building practices, such as energy-efficient air-purification and lighting systems, and recycled carpet. Nationally, buildings are evaluated for sustainability by industry standards such as Energy Star, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy, and the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. According to the 2007 *Green Building Survey*, a study by *National Real Estate Investor* magazine, polled corporate users anticipate that the amount of green facilities they own or lease will more than double, from 9 percent to 21 percent, in the next five years.

The Green Building Council maintains that because of higher lease rates and the productivity of healthier tenants, green building delivers value. "The average return on investment in a green building is 20 percent—and that's a number that's relevant to any building owner," says Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO and founding chair of the council. "The study also found that 'eight out of 10 developers say low operating costs are the greatest benefit of green building.'"

Mithun's Gregory serves on the national committee of LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND), a national program that will roll out next year as a rating system, as Gregory explains, to "help areas all around the United States without green-building programs understand the principles of smart growth [and develop] resource-efficient and walkable, livable communities, which are well-connected with transit." In Seattle, LEED ND selected three neighborhood projects to participate in the pilot program: the South Lake Union Urban Center; the Interbay Neighborhood Master Plan; and Thornton Place, south of Northgate Mall, for which Mithun is the architect. "The [LEED ND] program complements the Built Green program we have here in Washington," Gregory says.

Although local participation in Built Green is increasing, there is room for greater participation, according to Built Green's Adelstein.

"Seventy-eight percent of our annual building permits in the King and Snohomish market represent nongreen projects on an annual basis, so there's still a lot of work to be done," he says.

A Brighter Shade of Green

In the residential market, searching for green real estate has gotten easier now that the Northwest Multiple Listing Service has gotten in on the act. In June 2007, the database of the Northwest MLS began including environmental certifications, energy-efficient features and sustainable materials in its listing forms and database so house hunters can easily find homes with green features. The effort to include eco-features was spearheaded by Ben Kaufman, co-owner, founder and managing broker of GreenWorks Realty in Seattle. In a single recent MLS search, Kaufman found 570 homes certified as green with third-party verification, such as Built Green, Energy Star or LEED. Most of those homes are new construction.

Kaufman believes as advances are made in cleaner energy sources, there will be a change from a new-construction-driven market to one where traditional homes are made greener. "We will devise methods to take homes built in the '20s, '50s and '70s and improve energy efficiency, add value to the home and bring down the carbon footprint," he says. Kaufman predicts the healthy lifestyle a green home supports will be

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more important to buyers. "That will influence them to purchase a green home that has been certified as a green remodel or update to the home."

In some cases, real estate needs cleanup to achieve green status. The site of Barbee Mill, a waterfront community under construction in Renton, for example, was a former industrial site that has been rehabilitated and is being developed by Bellevue-based Connor Homes Company. When it is completed in 2011 or 2012, Barbee Mill will include 114 high-end paired homes on the 22.3-acre former home of Barbee Mill Co.

According to the city of Renton, as part of the site's cleanup, more than 600 feet of Lake Washington shoreline has been restored to a natural state, and May Creek, which runs through the site, has been revitalized as a home for fish and fowl. "The city is delighted to see this former contaminated industrial site returned to a viable and vibrant residential use," says Jennifer Toth Henning, planning manager with the city. Further renewal is happening in Renton: The former J.H. Baxter property to the north is being transformed from a contaminated wood-treatment operation to the new Virginia Mason Athletic Center, a practice, training and headquarters facility for the Seahawks football team.

This fall, Paul Joos and his wife, Desnee, will move into a home at Barbee Mill. Paul believes that despite its history, Barbee Mill presents buyers with a unique opportunity. "They'll never find another parcel of

land as big on a lake in an urban area that's close to downtown Seattle, Bellevue and all the cultural things," he says. "This is going to be the Medina of Renton."

Charlie Connor, president of Bellevue-based Connor Homes Company, is glad to see the site of Barbee Mill have a second chance. "The goal of the Growth Management Act [1990] was we would preserve the mountains and forests as much as possible by concentrating housing and jobs inside the growth boundary," Connor says, explaining his choice of location. "This is an instance that allows us to achieve that."

The ecology of real estate will keep evolving as the race for development-friendly space continues. Mithun's Gregory believes that whether for commercial or residential properties, green real estate "means better buildings, which means better communities."

"On the commercial side, the folks who aren't developing green will have trouble selling their buildings in the future," Gregory predicts. Similarly, green real estate progress bodes well for homeowners' nest eggs, he says. "Whether it's a home, condo, apartment building or cabin somewhere, it will be a better place to live because it operates on lower costs, plus it will be healthier in its materials and indoor air," Gregory says. "That's one thing to keep in mind, not only for your daily living but also in terms of how your investment matures in the future." ■

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