

REMODELING = GREEN

Consider Using Green Technologies And Products When You Remodel

BY BRUCE WENTWORTH, AIA



Bamboo Floors in a Wentworth, Inc. Kitchen Remodel

As eco-friendly construction and products move into the mainstream design process, design professionals are becoming more knowledgeable and savvy about what works and what doesn't when it comes to green construction. While building new is great, incorporating green elements into a home renovation is even greater, particularly in historical neighborhoods where a home's unique character is protected and building new is infrequent.

Remodeling our older homes to suit modern lifestyles is a smart and green way to go. According to a recent study out of the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, "Lower household mobility following the housing market crash means that in the coming years homeowners will increasingly focus on improvement with longer paybacks, particularly energy-efficient retrofits." Simply put: Renovating your current home with eco-friendly products that suit your taste and lifestyle is a smart choice.

Once a homeowner has decided to remodel, eco-friendly design control can be achieved through collaboration with their architect. An effective collaboration allows the client to have a hand in the decision making process, thus contributing to a smart home remodel. Homeowners can decide whether to keep it simple or delve deeper into the eco-friendly world. Evaluating design options enables a homeowner to make intelligent choices about space reconfigurations, an addition's design, and the types of green products to be incorporated in the final product. Though the incorporation of green products can be as simple as utilizing recycled materials for a tile backsplash, the myriad of green product options can seem overwhelming. Fortunately, a client who works directly with a design-build firm won't have to navigate the marketplace alone.

Flooring

Bamboo flooring is an increasingly popular way to install wood floors in your home without impacting the world's tree population. Preserver Bamboo is a bamboo flooring product which is available in a variety of prefinished stains as a tongue and groove boarding. While bamboo is an elegant and renewable product, there are quite a few other wood floor alternatives. Cork flooring from DuroDesign is composed of 100% post-industrial recycled content from wine cork production. This cork flooring is available in custom colors, is easy to maintain, and can even be installed over radiant floor heating. ECOsurface's recycled rubber flooring is made from scrap tire rubber and contributes to a unique design aesthetic with minimal impact to the environment.

Cabinets

A recent Wentworth, Inc. kitchen remodel used sustainable bamboo veneer cabinets. Bamboo cabinets can be faced with wood veneer from plantation-grown trees and Forest Stewardship Council-approved materials. Thin layers of wood veneer stretch the usefulness of any wood product. Another plantation grown wood is Lyptus, which is the trade name for a hybrid of the Eucalyptus tree grown in Brazil. Lyptus resembles maple in appearance and can be treated with a multitude of finishes. Lyptus trees are harvested every 15 years and are an alternative to precious oak, cherry, mahogany, and teak.

Countertops

Countertops fabricated from recycled paper - such as the Pa-

perStone countertop material from PaperStone Products - look great and function as well as honed granite. The recycled paper is mixed with petroleum-free phenolic resin (from cashew nutshell liquid) to manufacture the product in sheets. The black PaperStone resembles honed black granite but is warm to the touch. Another unique countertop material is 3form's "100 percent" resin countertops manufactured from 100% post-consumer recycled high-density polyethylene. "100 percent" is light, durable, and sure to spark conversation in any room.

Backsplash

Recycled glass is a great way to get an attractive, cost-effective, and guilt-free kitchen backsplash. For a recent kitchen remodel, Wentworth utilized Sandhill



Recycled glass backsplash, bamboo floors, and a PaperStone countertop result in a kitchen that works for the client and the environment.

glass tile. Sandhill was awarded a grant from the Alaska Science & Technology Foundation to develop innovative glass-fusing technology that utilizes 100 % recycled glass normally destined for landfills. Their glass tile fabrication uses half the energy necessary to produce a ceramic tile and a quarter of the energy it takes to produce cast glass tile. Sandhill glass tiles come in a range of sizes and 36 colors, with the option of a gloss or matte finish.

Structural Footings

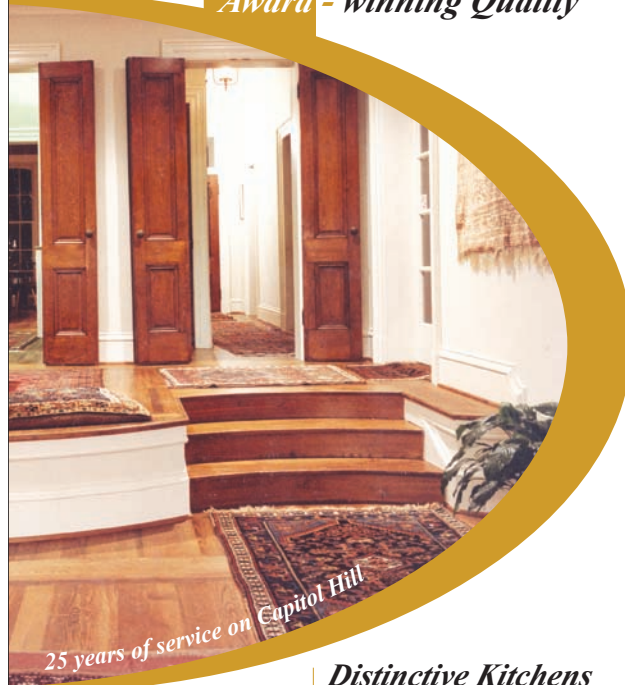
Simple porch or deck additions to your home can benefit from new helical footings – large metal corkscrews that utilize friction with the soil. For small additions, the use of helical footings can make excavation unnecessary. The helical footing design provides minimal disruption to tree roots, is cost-effective, and can minimize an addition's impact to the existing landscape.

Exterior Siding

Cement siding products, such as HardiPlank and HardiPanel, have received favorable reception in recent years. Fabricated from low cost concrete, the material can be utilized as clapboard or in sheets that resemble stucco. The material is fire resistant, moisture and insect proof, and negates the need for valuable wood products in a home remodel.

Remodeling your home with eye towards the environment will enhance both the value and the enjoyment of your home. Working with a knowledgeable design-build firm to navigate the green marketplace will ensure a smart and thoughtful design, one that makes sense for you and the environment.

Bruce Wentworth, AIA is president of Wentworth, Inc., an architect and home remodeling contractor. Visit www.wentworthstudio.com or call 240-395-0705 to learn more about Wentworth's design-build home remodeling services ★



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