



FOLLOW THE LEEDERS

SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

The buildings of King Kalakaua Plaza, designed by Honolulu design firm, Eight Inc., utilizes many methods of sustainable architecture, an ever-emerging, earth-conscious form of design that strives to minimize a building's negative impact by utilizing efficient methods of sustaining the environment, such as minimizing energy dependence, maximizing usable space, and using renewable resources. According to Mark Little, the firm's Honolulu principal, "Sustainability is about providing for the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of the future generation."

Certainly, Eight is doing its part of spreading the eco-ethos. With an A-list clientele and a beautiful portfolio, Eight is quickly emerging as a frontrunner in the sustainable architecture movement. The company, who also has offices in San Francisco, New York, London and Tokyo has taken on projects of all kinds, including retail stores, restaurants, art galleries, resorts and commercial properties. The firm's thoroughly calculated creations are setting the pace for cutting-edge design. Amongst this success, Little keeps Eight's passion for green blue-prints in the forefront. "We feel that we have an obligation to participate in sustainable architecture," he says. "It is irresponsible to build buildings that are not environmentally friendly."



SMALL STEPS FOR LIVING SUSTAINABLY

So you don't live in one of group 8's environmentally friendly homes, and you aren't looking to build commercial property in the near future. You can still take some simple steps to exist in a more sustainable fashion. And in these instances, going green might even save you some green when your electric bill comes.

NATURAL VENTILATION: Living in Hawaii has many benefits, including the refreshing trade winds that blow over the islands. Why not take advantage of this money-saving opportunity? Turn off your AC, crack open the windows, and let nature cool you off.

NATURAL LIGHT: Pull back those curtains and let the light shine in. Utilizing natural light will not only decrease your energy-consumption, but will also make you feel more in-tune with the outside world. For rooms without a view, be sure to use compact fluorescent lights. These bulbs will cost more upfront but will save you money in the long run.

LIGHTEN UP: When it comes time to repaint, consider a lighter shade for rooms that receive a

lot of sunlight. While dark colors absorb heat, light colors reflect it, which will make the sun-heavy rooms less of a heat trap.

UNPLUG: Whether it's iPod speakers, a coffee maker or even a cell phone charger, these household devices continue to drain energy while they are plugged into an outlet — in use or not. So when you grab your phone, yank the charger out of the wall. Though these devices don't use too much energy in stand-by mode, every little bit adds up.

One of Eight's most anticipated current projects, the Mālama Learning Center, which will be constructed in Honolulu, has been registered as LEED-platinum. Eight's design of the learning facility combines complex elements such as an educational institute, nature-conservatory study center, art center, dance studio, outdoor-indoor performance theater and community center, into an efficient, sustainable piece of architectural art. When completed, Mālama will be a new manifestation of the possibilities in sustainable living, conservation, and the cultural heritage of Hawaii. Eight was awarded with the project after receiving first place in



the Mālama Learning Center International Architectural Design Competition, and their design was recently awarded first place in the Future Education category at the World Architecture Festival in Barcelona.

As the movement grows larger, Little says that LEED is taking the lead in the industry. "LEED is becoming more mainstream. The industry as a whole is moving in that direction."

LEED supports many sustainable-building techniques, like maximizing daylight and natural light in structures, using insulated glass in the windows, maintaining an effective heating and cooling system, allowing for natural air ventilation throughout the building, and utilizing renewable energy technology.

Building a sustainable structure achieves more than the conservation of our world for future generations. It makes the time we have here more beautiful. "The environment of [these] buildings is a lot more human and friendly," Little says. "Taking material from the environment and allowing the outside world to penetrate the buildings makes them a nicer place to be."



GREEN BUILDING TRENDS

Green Roofs

What: Grass-covered roof tops.

Benefits: A plus for households and the environment because they reduce the building's overall heat-gain, help control storm-water runoff, and provide additional useable space with a great ambience. "Plus," Little adds eagerly, "it looks really cool."

Rammed Earth Walls

What: Constructing walls using raw materials such as mud, chalk, lime and gravel.

Benefits: These materials are incombustible, thermally insulating and sturdier than you might suspect. "It's a great building material because you can take soil on the site you are building on and use it," Little says. "It brings beautiful texture to the walls. People think that it would fall apart in the rain, but that is a misconception. It has the strength of concrete."

Sustainable Flooring

What: Bamboo, cork and eucalyptus flooring as a sustainable alternative to traditional hardwoods.

Benefits: These types of flooring mature in

roughly half the time, or less, that it takes typical hardwoods to reach maturity.

Where do Hawaii's buildings stand in this movement?

As the popularity of sustainable architecture continues to grow worldwide, you might wonder where Hawaii ranks in the movement. As is the case with most trends, Hawaii is a little behind, meaning that more could be done to up the sustainable ante. But do not blame the people of the islands. Blame high shipping costs. "We are behind because of the high cost of materials and labor as compared to the other contiguous states," says CEO of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii Karen Nakamura. "Government is mandating through building codes so consumers are not spending, which is delaying economic recovery."

That's not to say that Hawaii is doing nothing. According to an article that ran in the Pacific Business News journal, 83 projects in the state have applied for LEED certification this year, nearly doubling the amount of applicants from 2008 and tripling the amount from 2007. Here's to hoping that these sustainable projects LEED the rest of Hawaii by example.