



PCM Homes Going Green

Going green has been taken to a whole new level here in Oakville. Everyone has heard of green in one form or another, but green luxury homes, although available in some areas are a lot less talked about. Project and Construction Management Inc., PCM, is in the forefront of energy efficient building in Oakville and will stop at nothing to ensure the highest quality of energy efficiency is met. "Setting the standards that others can follow," is a statement that PCM lives by each and everyday.

Everyone enjoys and deserves their comforts and luxuries, however such a lifestyle is directly linked to the exorbitant consumption of carbon producing energy. "First and foremost we would like the next generations after us to have a planet to live in once we have lived in it too – and believe it or not, we can have the same energy consumption and lifestyle but with the possibility to become more 'planet' friendly or conscious which is achieved by the use of all kinds of readily available technologies today," Jardino explains. "These technologies may be a little costly yet and possibly not as dollar-efficient if used in average \$500,000 homes, but when speaking about multi-million dollar homes that can consume an average of \$1,500 in utilities per month it really is stupid that most of these homes are still being built without green elements such as Geothermal and Solar Energy. In fact it should be a condition on a building permit to have proper green elements in all of our luxury homes."

Although they have been around for decades, geothermal ground-source heating and cooling systems have drastically increased in popularity over the past couple of years. These systems use the earth as a direct source of energy, taking advantage of the fact that several feet below the ground the earth has a fairly consistent temperature. During the winter the ground temperature is warmer than the air, and in the summer it's cooler than the air. Because of this, heat can be transferred from the earth through ground loops and channeled indoors. Once inside, the heat that has been captured by the ground loops is gathered in an air handler and distributed by an air delivery system, much like a regular heating and cooling system. Renewable and storable energy is also being sought out through solar panels that cannot only heat a pool but be used as a secondary energy source throughout a home.

Although going green can cost an additional \$75,000 on top of conventional heating and cooling systems for a new home, homeowners will see a pay back from their saving in about four years. The initial cost can be a factor for many people when deciding whether this is the best route for them, however there are many reasons for this fairly new concept: "A good environmental conscience, a healthier environment, a long-term financial gain both from energy savings and from an increased house value," John Willmott of John Willmott Architect, Inc. says.

Geothermal heating and cooling systems significantly reduces energy consumption and cuts down on greenhouse gases and other pollutants created by the



Example of an Energy Star Luxury Home Built by PCM Inc. in South East Oakville.

burning of fossil fuels – as well as with the processing and transporting of these fuels. The systems also help maintain a comfortable humidity level inside homes. Because they don't rely on outside air for combustion, they minimize the amount of outdoor pollutants and pollens circulating inside the home, which in the end may benefit allergy sufferers.

The idea of building a home that has the possibility to actually produce more energy than it consumes is no longer just a thought in Oakville. With more and more people realizing that this is the future, residents are taking more of an interest in the green way of thinking. "Oakville is an excellent market for green building," Willmott believes. "Those building new houses for themselves are generally well educated business professionals who should understand the value in building green from a health and well-being point of view, and a long-term financial benefit in some cases."

The building process is also starting to become more green-friendly as well. "Everyone I deal with that is buying a lot to construct a new home is looking at how to waste less and reuse," Dan Cooper, an award winning Royal LePage broker who always wanted to strive to be known as Oakville's green realtor says.

According to a survey by EnerQuality the proportion of buyers purchasing energy efficient feature when building a home has increased to 60 per cent from 48 per cent only a year ago. "Within the last five years, green has become a buzzword that everyone is



familiar with," Cooper says. "At the beginning it was just talked about, but now it is being put to use."

Though new homes are now being built to a certain energy standard, luxury homes certainly surpass the average home's rates. Because these luxury homes do consume a lot more energy, it only makes sense to have the most energy efficient system in the home. "How can consumers reject the idea of a healthy house? As more product hits the market and more is consumed, price will not be an obstacle," Willmott says.

"You either buy into the concept or you don't. If you don't, you aren't going to get anywhere. As the maturing population gets more educated in this field, they'll grasp it more. It will be a more natural, self-fulfilling phenomena," Cooper adds.

As more houses are being built with features such as solar panels and geothermal heating and cooling systems, it will start to become clear to many that this is the way the housing market is going.

For more information on energy efficient luxury homes contact Carlos Jardino at 416-414-6577.

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