



# SUSTAINABLE RESIDENTIAL INTERIORS

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SECOND EDITION

AMERICAN  
SOCIETY OF  
INTERIOR  
DESIGNERS



WILEY

Figure 3.23  
Photos: Heidi Mendoza,  
RE.DZINE



Figure 3.24

This single-family residence in the sought-after Highlands neighborhood is a contemporary, energy-efficient home. It is designed to make a positive, sustained impact on homeowners and the environment. This small site called for a compact square footprint that incorporates an attached garage. The main floor is open and provides views of the downtown skyline. The upper floor houses the sleeping area and home office and features a rooftop patio.

The project raised funds to support an annual scholarship for North High School students wishing to pursue a career in the green building industry and also to educate visitors about affordable, sustainable building through tours, open houses, seminars, and special events showcasing its green vendors.

This project was a collaboration of local talent with a passion for sustainable building.

When I saw the initial concept for the Green Cube project, I immediately knew I was going to be part of something amazing. My role was to work on the interiors alongside 2B Studios. I was responsible for choosing materials for the entire home, for the design of the second-floor master bedroom, and for the office and master bedroom layout and design. I was also in charge of contacting local artists and furniture makers about showcasing their work in Green Cube during an art event night and parade of homes. Local green businesses outfitted every aspect of the solar-powered home with environmentally friendly and sustainable products, from materials and finishes to a green wall that produces vegetables year-round and helps filter the house naturally, improving the air quality.

Green Cube also features granite countertops, radiated heat floors, and swamp coolers instead of an air-conditioning unit—all of which help improve the indoor air quality.



Figure 3.25





*Figure 16.5 The stairs serve as an open, transitional space from the kitchen to the small upstairs home office that makes use of energy-efficient equipment. Also featured is an accent wall created out of Wall Flats made with 100 percent bamboo pulp. Wall Flats are biodegradable and recyclable at the end of their life cycle.*

*Photo by Jennifer M Koskinen/Merritt Design Photo. Design by RE.DZINE, Studio 2b, and Architectural Workshop. Contractor: Urban Green.*

## Where Does It Come From?

- Computers and office equipment are made from a wide variety of materials, the majority of which are metal, plastic, and glass.
- Computers and office equipment often contain hazardous materials such as heavy metals, vinyl, and toxic chemicals.
- Computers and office equipment rely on electricity for power.

## Maintenance

Keep the computer, printer, and other office equipment turned off when not in use. Activate automatic shutdown and power-saver features on the computer; turn off the power strip or unplug the adapter as well. Clocks, power-indicator lights, and similar devices use standby energy, which can quickly add up to 1 percent or more of the residential total.

Rechargeable batteries are much more eco-friendly than disposables. Locate battery and printer cartridge recycling options.

## Where Does It Go?

Ideally, home office equipment will be recycled. Approximately one billion computers were scrapped between 2007 and 2010.<sup>9</sup> But there has been little economic incentive to do so thus far. The thousands of different plastic components, benign by comparison to the toxic heavy metal components, are still the

most challenging to recycle, according to the EPA. The process requires disassembling hazardous components, a job primarily relegated to the people at the lowest economic rungs of society, such as prisoners and citizens of developing countries—including children. Without protective gear or fair labor standards to protect them, they are at high risk for poisoning, cancer, and other work-related ailments.

Manufacturers, governments, and public-interest organizations are attempting to make electronics and computers greener and to make recycling an economically

<sup>9</sup>Consumer Reports Greener Choices, [www.eco-labels.org](http://www.eco-labels.org).