



ROOM-BY-ROOM ARCHITECTURE: GREENING THE BUILDING

“Architecture must somehow express spirit. It must be the embodiment of an idea as well as the outgrowth of a function.” (*Peter Blake, An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow*) Whether redesigning, retrofitting or starting new construction, green building design challenges us to consider how we utilize space and how we will maintain our buildings now and in the future. Our role as stewards of the earth requires that we construct buildings that transcend basic code requirements to improve overall building performance and minimize environmental impact and cost. Here are some green suggestions you can use on your building or home today:

- With any existing building, begin by preparing an **energy audit** to identify and repair existing conditions:
 - Repair all cracks and air leaks
 - Replace worn weather stripping
 - Repair cracked or broken windows
 - Repair leaking pipes, toilets and faucets
- Insulate the water heater and pipes. (**Learn more about insulation materials**)
- Check with your local power company and explore the use of solar, wind, geothermal and other renewable energy sources.
- Purchase **Energy Star** appliances to ensure maximum efficiency.
- Consider using local products to save energy transporting materials.
- Use recycled building products as often as possible; examples include:
 - Wood certified by the **Forest Stewardship Council** or **Natural Resources Defense Council**
 - “Green Label” certified recycled carpet (**Learn more about green flooring**)
 - Recycled glass, as opposed to ceramics, for countertops
- Use porous materials for exterior pathways—gravel, sand, woodchips and recycled materials—that rerun water to the ground.
- Install ceiling fans and automatic or programmable thermostats that change settings when rooms are not in use.
- Install faucet aerators and water-saving flow valves.
- Use non-toxic and VOC-free building materials for adhesives, sealants, plastics, paint, etc.

If you are engaging an architect or other design professional to help green your building or home, use the following resources to help guide your green architectural choices:

- **Rejoice in Your Handiwork Part One: Congregational Guide to the Process of Renovating and Rebuilding**
- **Rejoice in Your Handiwork Part Two: Form and Function—Design Considerations for Congregations** (*excerpt*)
- **Sacred Space and Synagogue Architecture**
- **COEJL Green Architecture Resources**
- **AIA Sustainability Resource Center**
- **United States Green Building Council**
- **Green Building Initiative**
- **Target Finder** (*helps you set realistic energy targets/goals*)
- **When It’s Greener to Build** (*from the American Lung Association*)

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Please note that this guide provides suggestions, not directives, that you and your congregation can consider implementing.

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ROOM-BY-ROOM BATHROOM: GREENING THE BATHROOM

Clean water is vital to human health, sustains millions of species globally, hydrates crops and is essential for creating many forms of energy. Rabbi Levi ben Hiyata taught that “without rain [water], the earth cannot endure...” (Genesis Rabbah 13:3).

One of the quickest and easiest ways to green your bathroom is to use certified natural or organic cleaners. Here are some more suggestions:

To reduce paper wastage:

- Install energy efficient electric hand dryers.
- If you do use paper towels, make sure they are from recycled sources.
- Use recycled paper toilet paper as well—more flushable and less destructive to our forests.

To cut costs, energy usage and consumption:

- Repair and maintain all pipes to ensure no leakage.
- Install low flush toilets; or, update to dual flush, which can be retrofitted to existing infrastructure.
- Install low-flow faucets and shower heads.
- Investigate and consider installing solar-powered water heaters.
- Install CFLs and motion sensors for lighting so lights turn off when they are not needed.

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ROOM-BY-ROOM CLASSROOM: GREEN LEARNING

The Talmud explains: While the sage, Choni, was walking along a road, he saw a man planting a carob tree. Choni asked him: "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?" "Seventy years," replied the man. Choni then asked: "Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat its fruit?" The man answered: "I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planted it for me. Likewise, I am planting for my children."

Today, we must not only plant trees for future generations but also teach our Movement's youth about ethical and Jewish stewardship of the planet. Employing eco-conscious practices in the classroom develops lifelong green habits. Consider developing a curriculum that explores Jewish environmentalism. Work with your synagogue educator, local experts and the Union to plan lessons, field trips and environmental service projects.

Here are some other greening suggestions you can use in your classroom today:

To reduce paper wastage:

- Use recycled paper and notebooks for class.
- Email announcements to parents rather than sending home paper handouts.

To cut costs, energy usage and consumption:

- Install CFLs and motion sensors for office lights so they turn off when not needed.
- Install ceiling fans in rooms not used daily.
- Encourage students to bring their own water bottles and other utensils for snack during religious school.
- Ask parents to purchase snacks in bulk (not single serving sizes) to reduce unnecessary waste of packaging.
- Place recycling bins for paper, glass, plastic and aluminum in each classroom.
- Buy pencils made from recycled materials, soy ink pens and markers.
- Buy toxic-free markers for white boards.
- Consider starting a religious school-tended garden to teach the principles of organic-Jewish agriculture. Food/flowers grown can be served/displayed at synagogue functions (e.g., decorations for the Sukkah!).

For greener commuting to and from religious school:

- Encourage carpools; consider creating a carpool network to help neighbors connect.
- Host adult classes/programs during religious school to encourage lifelong learning as well as ease the commuting environmental impact.
- Install bike racks.

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ROOM-BY-ROOM COMMUTING: DRIVING TO GREENER PASTURES

Eco-conscious commuting is about reducing our cars' carbon emissions as well as reforming society's transportation patterns to reduce the need for CO2 intensive traveling.

Suggestions for a greener commute:

- Consider commuting to work (or other places, for that matter,) via public transportation*, carpools or hybrid cars.
- Use **Zipcars** or other shared car options where available.
- Get back on your bike! Think about getting around town on a bike, on rollerblades or just on your own two feet. (Bonus for multi-taskers: This allows you to exercise while you're getting to where you need to go!)
- Consider providing special parking for hybrid cars and installing bike racks to encourage such eco-friendly transportation.
- Create a carpool network for congregants and employees to use when commuting to or from the synagogue for religious school, worship services or other congregational activities.

If there is not adequate public transportation in your town, work with your local and state governments to create better transportation options for all residents. You can also contact the **Religious Action Center for assistance.*

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ROOM-BY-ROOM GREEN GARDENS: ECO-LANDSCAPING

Jewish tradition teaches us that, “It is forbidden to live in a city that does not have a green garden.” (Mishna Kiddushin 4:12) Preserving the natural beauty (and carbon storing vegetation) of the earth is a Jewish obligation. Here are some suggestions to help you cultivate a greener garden.

Planting your garden:

- Landscape on the least-sloped part of your property to minimize soil erosion, which emits CO₂ by allowing the stored greenhouse gas to escape.
- Strategically plant shade trees to keep your home naturally cool in the summer and reduce A/C usage.
- Plant local and native plants that require minimal water.
- Grow your own produce. (Bonus: You’ll save money and time by not purchasing fruits, vegetables and herbs at the grocery store!)

Tending to your garden:

- Water the lawn/gardens early in the morning.
- Heavily water once every four or five days instead of in small amounts daily.
- Use 100% recycled mulch and organic fertilizer, and choose organic pesticides and plant food.
- If you do use toxic fertilizers, install natural barriers such as wood panels or stone walls to prevent fertilizer runoff into local drains.
- Use a push lawnmower to eliminate CO₂ emissions. Use grass clippings as natural fertilizer.
- **Compost** as much bio-degradable waste as possible.
- Use rain buckets to catch water to hydrate your gardens.

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ROOM-BY-ROOM KITCHEN: ECO-KOSHER

Kashering a kitchen is not only about dietary rules; it is about practicing compassionate and sustainable living in the very room that provides us basic sustenance. Strive to serve foods with a low ecological footprint and minimal packaging, and work to reduce unnecessary waste. The following are suggestions for an environmentally friendly kitchen.

Fill your kitchen and curb consumption:

- Purchase **Energy Star** appliances to maximize energy efficiency.
- Use recycled paper napkins, paper towels and 100% biodegradable trash bags.
- Use reusable plates, utensils and cups. Avoid purchasing non-biodegradable disposable cutlery.
- Install low-flow faucets for the kitchen sinks.
- Unplug unnecessary appliances (like your microwave or toaster) when not in use.
- When entertaining, use cloth table coverings rather than disposable ones.

The food you eat:

- Buy local and/or organic produce.
- Purchase organic or cage-free eggs, meat, milk, etc.
- Drink **Fair Trade** coffees and teas.
- Grow your own produce. (**Learn more about Community Sustained Agriculture in the Green Glossary**)
- Buy non-perishable items in bulk (not individual size) to reduce packaging. (Bonus: Buying in bulk is often less expensive in the long-run!)
- Instead of buying bottled water, consider attaching a tap water purifier to your sink or using some other water purifier like a Brita or PUR. (Bonus: This saves you money and you don't have to schlep water jugs and big packs of water bottles home from the grocery store!)
- Reduce the use of plastic or paper bags for food by using cloth reusable bags to carry groceries.

Cleaning the Kitchen:

- **Compost** your leftovers.
- Avoid hand washing dishes when possible (it often uses more water than a dishwasher).
- Only run your dishwasher when it is full. Allow the dishes to air dry.
- Know how your neighborhood recycles and place paper, glass, plastic and aluminum in their appropriate bins. (If your neighborhood doesn't recycle—speak up! Start a recycling program in your community.)
- Use certified natural or organic cleaners.

A new dimension to keeping kosher in a green world: **Hekhsher Tzedek** is a project of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism which certifies food items to be ethically produced. In addition to items being Kosher, they are also required to be produced under ethical labor practices, corporate transparency and with minimal environmental impact.

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ROOM-BY-ROOM OFFICE SPACE: GREENING YOUR WORK

A good portion of your day is likely spent in either your work office or home office so reducing the carbon and waste footprint of the office is a great place to start. Like the modern Jewish leader Abraham Joshua Heschel, who described the civil rights march in Selma as, "I felt my legs were praying," we should all strive to find holiness in the actions we take to bring about a better world. Greening your office is praying with actions and leading by example. Here are some suggestions to help you.

To reduce paper wastage:

- Offer congregants the option to choose emailed copies of the synagogue newsletter rather than paper copies. (Bonus: Fewer paper copies means you'll also save on postage!)
- Use paper that has 50% or higher recycled content.
- Print double sided and/or reuse the back of paper for scraps.
- Minimize the use of labels to reduce paper consumption. Handwrite addresses or print directly on envelopes.
- **Take yourself off unsolicited postal mailing lists.**

To cut costs, energy usage and consumption:

- Combine several individual paper mailings in to one to save on postage.
- Ask your facilities manager to:
 - Install CFLs and motion sensors for office lights so they turn off when not needed.
 - Use **Energy Star** appliances to ensure maximum energy efficiency.
 - Set your thermostat's temperature higher in the summer (73 degrees) and lower in the winter (67 degrees). Dress accordingly.
 - Turn off the central air conditioning overnight.
 - Place recycling bins for paper, glass, plastic and aluminum in the office.
 - Recycle your old electronics (e-cycle).
 - Recycle your printer toners or just buy replacement cartridges.
- When purchasing new computers buy either energy-efficient desktops with LCD monitors or laptops.
- Unplug, or at least turn off, unnecessary appliances when not in use.
- Instead of a water cooler or buying bottled water, consider attaching a tap water purifier to your sink.
- Bring your own reusable plates, mugs, flatware and glasses to the office.

For a greener commute to and from the office:

- Consider commuting to work via public transportation, carpools, hybrid cars or self transportation, like walking or biking.
- Think about creating a carpooling network to make it easier for employees to commute together.
- Install bike racks.
- Consider designating desirable parking areas for hybrid or electric cars.

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