



LOBBY

With white terrazzo floors and glass-walled stairs, the USGBC's headquarters is the slick new face of sustainable commercial interiors.

After designing offices for some of the leading environmental groups in the country, Envision Design takes on its biggest challenge yet: creating a new headquarters for the U.S. Green Building Council that puts the organization's ideas—and ideals—into action.



Ultimate Client

by
**Suzanne
LaBarre**

It doesn't feel green. The Eero Saarinen Womb chairs in the lobby, the sparkling terrazzo floors under your feet, the crisp white paint on the walls, glass everywhere—and more glass. Here in the new Washington, D.C., headquarters of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), corporate pomp is at high tide. If not for the oversize logo carved into wood at the entrance like a medallion, the office could easily be mistaken for the cool recesses of a fashion magazine.

Of course, *Vogue* wouldn't have 500-year-

Courtesy Envision

Photographs by
**Eric
Laignel**



old salvaged timber as wall decor. Nor would it have lighting that consumes just less than half a watt per square foot. And it would most definitely not have, on an otherwise bare wall behind a cubicle pod in the middle of the office, a soy-inked outline of an oak tree made up entirely of inspirational quotes. (One leaf, falling from a branch, reads: “‘To move the world, we must first move ourselves’ —Socrates.”) The space, for all its studied sleekness, retains plenty of the USGBC’s cheery, green soul.

METROPOLIS June 2009



DETAILS
The USGBC’s logo [above], carved into 200- to 500-year-old Tennessean gumwood, accents the office entrance.

It's a \$9 million aesthetic, and it tells you everything you need to know about where the green-building movement is today and where it's headed. Since its inception 16 years ago, the USGBC has become, rather sweepingly, the preeminent dispenser of sustainable-design mores; its chief commodity, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building-certification program, is the "benchmark of green," as Bill Walsh, executive director of the Healthy Building Network, says. Dickey times have forced some nonprofits to downsize, others to shutter altogether, but the council is expanding at such a clip that it outgrew its old 25,000-square-foot office two and a half years after the paint had dried. The new headquarters, housed in an undistinguished 1975 office building on L Street, ushers in a fresh era of discretionary architecture, in which renovated commercial interiors supplant from-the-ground-up construction—the ultimate act of recycling. More important, the project is the first slated for LEED Platinum certification under the USGBC's strict new rating system, despite being three times larger—and decidedly slicker—than its predecessor. It's a testament to the organization's fortitude and the resonance of its mission. If LEED is indeed the benchmark of green, and surely it is, then the council's tailored digs signal a shift in green building itself.

Such an undertaking demanded the greatest mark of maturity: playing nice with others. Gone is the age of the starchitect, the heroic megalomaniac, conducting a glass-and-steel symphony of his own composition. He's been tossed in the dustbin alongside the masters of the universe, the relics of a profligate (if nonsingular) era. Taking the lead, sustainable design has made a fetish of efficiency, preferring a team of specialists to a solitary genius. The USGBC gathered an ensemble of green-building sages, with the architect Kendall Wilson, of D.C.'s Envision Design, holding the baton. Marrying their ideas, they transformed a couple of gutted floors into a thoroughly sustainable workplace—a demonstration not just of the sophistication of green building today but of a fresh way of practicing architecture. "What's unique about this project is that it really was an integrated design process," Wilson says. "It doesn't happen a lot because the architect's pride is a bit at stake, you know? It requires an architectural team that's willing to drop that and say, 'Let's figure out the best way to do this.'"

Entry



The USGBC president wanted "an office that represented an organization that had come of age," says Kendall Wilson, the building's architect. Above: Saarinen's Womb chairs sit in the lobby.



GREEN QUALITY
Linear recessed light fixture: Mod2, by Litecontrol
Energy-efficient T5 lamp; certified Cradle to Cradle Silver by MBDC; steel components contain 25 percent pre-consumer recycled content; manufactured in Hanson, Massachusetts [390 miles away from the USGBC headquarters; see materials-selection map on page 110]



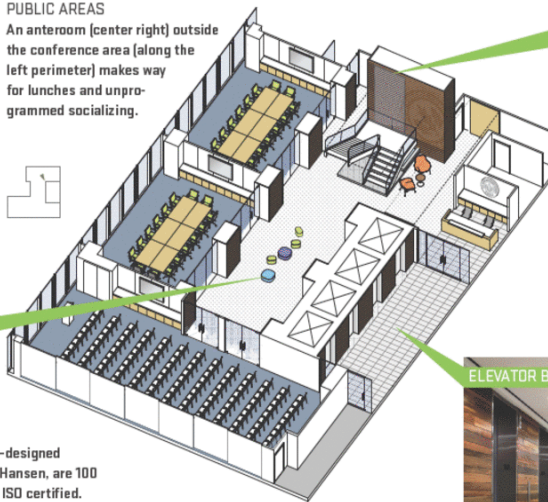
GREEN QUALITY
Clear finish on salvaged-wood wall paneling: Waterborne Pre-Cat Lacquer 275, by Fuhr Industrial
Water-based finish surpasses SCAQMD requirements for VOCs



GREEN QUALITY
Terrazzo flooring: Custom-mixed white
Made with 100 percent postconsumer recycled glass, mixed on-site

PUBLIC AREAS

An anteroom [center right] outside the conference area [along the left perimeter] makes way for lunches and unprogrammed socializing.



SEATING

The Piero Lissoni-designed poufs, from Fritz Hansen, are 100 percent wool and ISO certified.



WATER FEATURE

WOOD USE

The repetition of a gumwood detail links the elevators [below] to the lobby.

ELEVATOR BANK



All images courtesy Envision

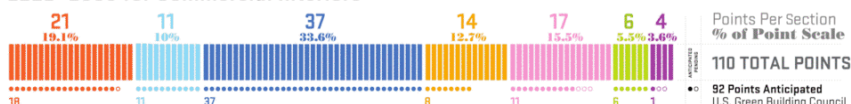


The USGBC headquarters is the first commercial interior slated for Platinum under the organization's revised certification program. In response to criticism that its previous model didn't fully address climate change, the new 100-point LEED Version 3 favors energy-efficient building systems and water conservation, and awards bonus points for regionally sensitive design, like situating a project near public transit. When plans for USGBC's new home got under way, the new version was already in development. "We based a lot of our design on what had come before," Wilson says. "We had to design hoping that whatever they came up with would meet what we did." The graph at left compares the new version of LEED for Commercial Interiors to the previous one.

LEED® for Commercial Interiors Version 2.0



LEED® 2009 for Commercial Interiors



Wilson marches about the office, futzng constantly. It's early April and D.C.'s unfathomably gorgeous cherry blossoms embower the streets. Wilson is on the fifth floor of 2101 L Street in the downtown business district, grumbling. The Eames chairs are in the wrong place. Someone moved the ottomans. And what is a black projector doing in this white, white conference room? "There's a limit to what you can control," he says, a little exasperated. He could be anywhere from 35 to 55 (he's 52), and in his pressed slate suit, he could easily pass for a K Street sharper. In fact, Wilson is the ne plus ultra of sustainable nonprofit interiors, having designed for the Environmental Defense Fund, the World Wildlife Fund, and Conservation International. "It's like having a kid," he goes on, averting his eyes from a misplaced molded-

plywood seat, "and telling him, 'Don't go out and party.'" Ten years ago, there weren't many eco-friendly Eames chairs to fret over. Wilson opened Envision Design in 1999 with Diana Horvat, his business partner. Their inaugural project was Greenpeace's headquarters—a tricky assignment at a time when green building was more an idea than an industry. Wilson

THE BUILDING
Though the freshly renovated 1970s office building is not LEED certified itself, it accommodates the USGBC's rigorous demands through a "green lease."



"There was no question that Ken [Wilson] was the designer for us," says Rick Fedrizzi, president of the USGBC. "He's effective about communicating what we're about."

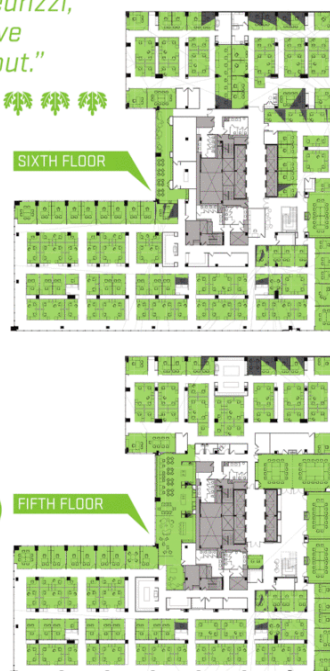
Team



- 1) Kendall Wilson, Envision
- 2) Chris Smith, USGBC
- 3) Linda Sorrento, USGBC
- 4) Rick Fedrizzi, USGBC
- 5) Chris Brown, CBRE
- 6) Joanna Shopf, Davis
- 7) Summer Minchew, Envision
- 8) Brendan Owens, USGBC
- 9) Sean Dorsey, Envision
- 10) Scott Stewart, SKBA
- 11) Matt Cafritz, Davis
- 12) Katie Lombardi, Envision
- 13) Patrick Kunze, GHT
- 14) Paul O'Brien, GHT
- 15) Ben Cohen, Davis
- 16) Ruthie Edmondson, Vornado
- 17) Sally Wilson, CBRE
- 18) Rod Letonja, Envision



The USGBC has open floor plans (right), flooding employees with daylight and, in some instances, cross-room views.



LEED points diagram, Criswell Lippin and Envision; group portrait, Ana Ka'ahanui; exterior, Larry Olsan; all images courtesy Envision

GREEN QUALITY
White paint:
Harmony, by
Sherwin Williams,
Colors: Pure
White [walls]
and Incredible
White [ceilings]
No VOCs; surpasses
SCAQMD require-
ments; Greenguard
certified; manufac-
tured in Baltimore
(34 miles away)

GREEN QUALITY
Perimeter carpet tile:
The Groove by Lees,
Color: Chamois
Manufactured for
USBC, with higher
than normal recycled
material [64.5 per-
cent postconsumer,
preconsumer, and
biobased content];
Antron fiber is
certified as an
Environmentally
Preferable Product;
permanent stain
resistance; manufac-
tured in Glasgow, Virginia
(207 miles away)

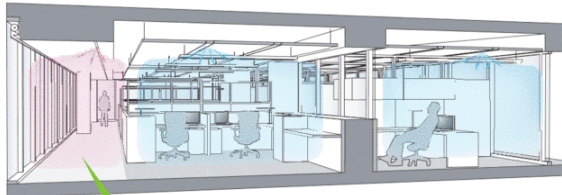


THE PERIMETER

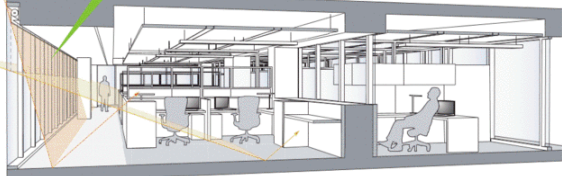
An "eco-corridor," characterized by light carpet and varying temperatures, brightens the office while significantly curtailing energy consumption.

THE CUBES

LEED Platinum certification necessitated open floor plans. Nature imagery on the cubicles (above and right) disrupts the monotony.

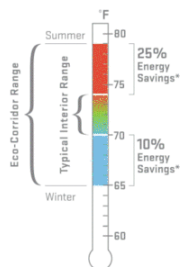


ECO-CORRIDOR DAYLIGHT MANAGEMENT



ENERGY SAVINGS

The eco-corridor saves the most energy during Washington, D.C.'s, hot, humid summers.



recalls the group's message to him: "We give a lot of people a lot of shit. So they're going to be pointing back at us, saying, 'Why didn't you do this in your own office?'" Though he'd never tackled a sustainable commercial interior, and in terms of materials, pickings were pretty slim, he managed to track down enough green swag to silence the antagonists. Awash in crayon colors, the place had plenty of spunk, if not much elegance, perhaps a result of the recycled yogurt containers used for countertops.

Since then, green building has rapidly evolved. Seen through the monocle of the American Institute of Architects' Top Ten Green Projects awards, started in 1997, a sort of ugly-duckling narrative unfolds. The first winners were nature centers and rehabs, with the occasional school; when they weren't grossly under-designed, they were rank studies in brown.

Office Spaces



GREEN QUALITY
Carpet tile:
The Field, by Lees,
Color: Bluestone
See perimeter carpet
callout for green qual-
ities [detail below].



Fast forward to 2009: an airy affordable-housing complex with rooftop photovoltaic cells in San Jose, California, shares the platform with a transparent office building in Seattle that looks as though it were torn from a reel of Jacques Tati's *Play Time*. "Early award winners had a closer kinship to the solar buildings of the seventies than they did to good modern design," says Henry Siegel, former chair of the AIA Committee on the Environment, which administers the award. "That's completely disappeared. Now it's, How can you do a strong contemporary design that integrates these metrics rather than tacks them on as hardware?"

Like any social movement, green building owes its rise to a calculus of factors: policy changes in which states and cities adopted rigorous building codes; manufacturing advances that spawned recyclable carpets and Greenguard-certified furniture; and a public

All images courtesy Evision



GREEN QUALITY
Workstation
tack-panel fabric:
Applesseed,
by DesignTex.
Color: Endive
Completely recycled
polyester

that finally decided to give a hoot, thanks to majordomos like Al Gore and Ed Mazria. The USGBC has been a major actor. LEED was formed in 1999 to give the construction industry a rewards system of sorts for building green. In 2005, a little more than a thousand projects were registering annually; by 2008, the figure had ballooned to nearly 9,000. It wasn't the world's first green-building index (that honor goes to the U.K.'s Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method), and it certainly isn't perfect (architects kvetch about it the way drivers bemoan the DMV), but it remains the only one to engage the business realm, and for this reason it has hurtled past the competition, handing down design standards like Mosaic law. "LEED really upped the ante for green building," Siegel says. "Everyone complains about LEED, but there's no debate that it has been transforming in terms of demand."

GREEN QUALITY
Acoustic ceiling
tile: Optima Open
Plan in Techzone
Grid System,
by Armstrong.
High reflectance:
73 percent recycled
content; contributes
to energy
savings; manufactured
in Marietta,
Pennsylvania
(110 miles away)

GREEN QUALITY
Linear direct/indirect
pendant light
fixtures: Bruno,
by Peerless
Energy-efficient
T5 lamp; controlled
by the Convia programmable smart-
building system,
which manages
lighting, occupancy,
and daylight-
harvesting sensors

GREEN QUALITY
Open workstations:
Compose system,
Zody task chair,
and Bravo task
light, by Haworth.
Workstation:
Greenguard certified;
50 percent recycled
content. Task chair:
Greenguard certified;
19 percent postconsumer
and 32 percent pre-
consumer recycled
content; upholstery
has 100 percent
recycled material.
Task light: high level
of adjustability;
diminable; energy-
efficient LED lighting
(11.2 watts); 27 percent pre-
consumer and 15 percent
postconsumer recycled
content

GREEN QUALITY
Window shades:
Ecoveil shade
fabric with
automatic
control system,
by MechoShade
Fabric is non-
PVC; Cradle to
Cradle certified;
electronically
controlled system
automatically
raises and lowers
shades based
on seasonal sun
angles; increases
natural daylight-
ing and reduces
glare; manufactured
in Edison,
New Jersey
(177 miles away)

GREEN QUALITY
Tack-panel
fabric: Ricochet,
by Knoll.
Color: Cornflower
80 percent recycled
polyester



An executive office with Knoll case goods and Saarinen guest chairs peers out over the general work area.

To design a truly sustainable interior, it takes a village—or at least a team of building wonks willing to check their self-regard.



FLEXIBLE SPACE

The space is laid out on a modular grid so it can be easily reconfigured.

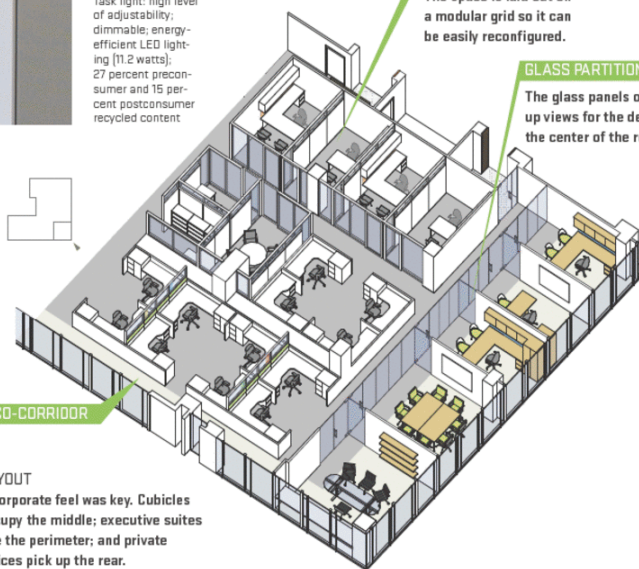
GLASS PARTITION

The glass panels open up views for the desks in the center of the room.

ECO-CORRIDOR

LAYOUT

A corporate feel was key. Cubicles occupy the middle; executive suites line the perimeter; and private offices pick up the rear.





- ● Italy
- ● Denmark
- China

USGBC's Material World

Many green interiors in the recent past have looked like the aesthetic equivalent of oatmeal: good for you but a bit on the bland side. Blame it on a limited palette of materials. That has changed, as LEED has continued to grow and designers, in turn, have demanded a greater number of sustainable options. For Wilson and his team, material selection has always been an intense, research-driven process. LEED-CI awards one point if at least 20 percent of building materials and products are manufactured within a 500-mile radius of the site; an additional point is awarded if half of those materials and products are extracted, harvested, or recovered (as well as made) within the same area. [These are called Materials & Resource, or MR, credits.] Consequently, each choice for the USGBC's headquarters was preceded by a leading question: Where was it made? Did it fall within that magical 500-mile radius? According to early calculations, the office easily exceeded the baseline requirements for these credits. This map shows where all of the products and materials inside the USGBC originated and also calls out Wilson's favorites [and important ones that proved difficult to photograph].



So it was only natural that the USGBC's office would stand as a monument to the very movement the group helped advance.

USGBC's president, Rick Fedrizzi, had an uncomplicated vision. He wanted classic modern furniture, light everywhere, and crispness. And it had to be corporate—very corporate. Not such an odd request when you consider the organization's enterprising provenance. A germ of an idea in the early '90s, it was intended to help manufacturers cut costs on federal building projects through energy efficiency. It was briefly called the U.S. Green Manufacturers Council. (The "U.S." qualifier was intended to give it a link, however misleading, to the public sphere, which explains why the USGBC is still frequently mistaken for a government agency.) To broaden its appeal, the organization launched as the U.S. Green Building Council, opening its membership to stakeholders across the building in-



The chair was selected in large part because of its practicality. The USGBC conference room is used for a number of different purposes [lectures, dining, as a boardroom], and these chairs can be efficiently stored as needed. The Kart Chair contains 41 percent recycled content by weight, and its materials are completely recyclable. It's certified by SCS as Indoor Advantage Gold for indoor air quality and upholstered in 100 percent wool.

LEGEND

- \$0-10,000
- \$10,000-25,000
- \$25,000-50,000
- \$50,000-100,000
- \$100,000-150,000
- Over \$150,000

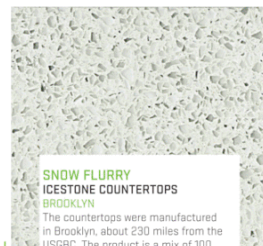
Map, Criswell Lappin and Envision; USGBC photos, Eric Laignel/courtesy Envision;



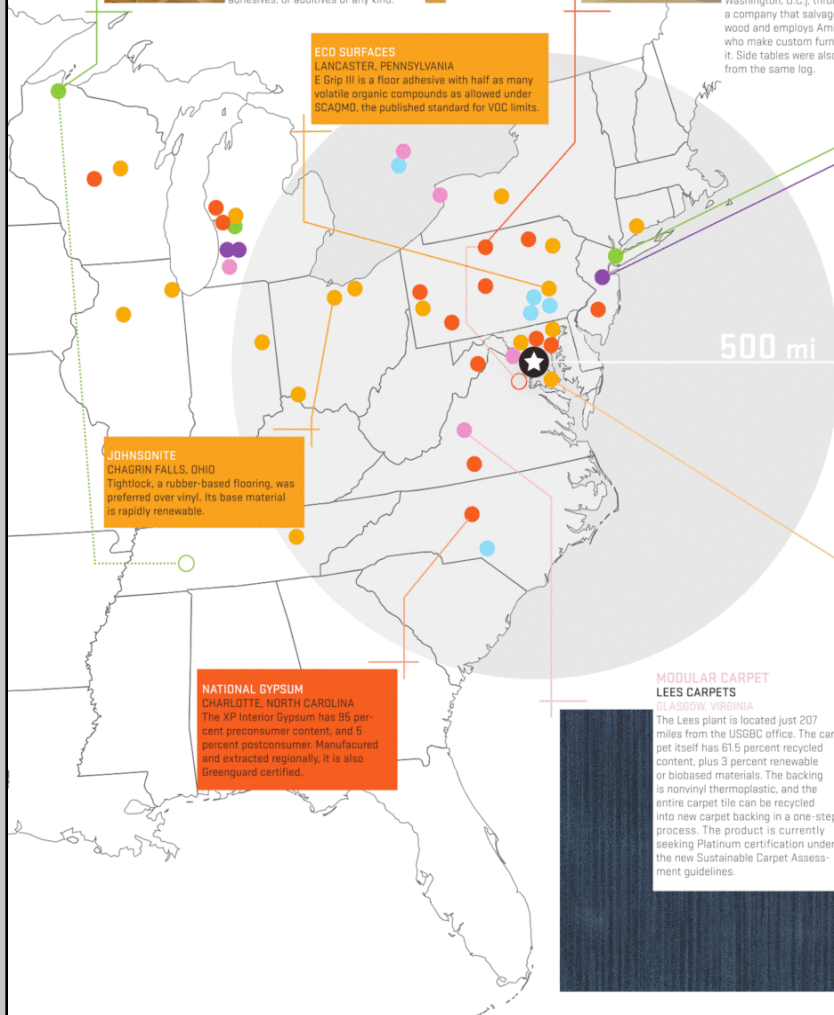
RECLAIMED GUMWOOD
TIMELESS TIMBERS
 ASHLAND, WISCONSIN
 Pulled from the bottom of the Tennessee River, the wood has been third-party certified by SCS as being 100 percent recovered submerged lumber and containing no chemicals, adhesives, or additives of any kind.



COMMUNITY TABLE AND BANQUET CITILOG
 CENTER, PENNSYLVANIA
 The walnut was sourced from a tree in Vienna, Virginia (a suburb of Washington, D.C.), through CitiLog, a company that salvages urban hardwood and employs Amish craftsmen who make custom furniture out of it. Side tables were also created from the same log.



SNOW FLURRY
ICESTONE COUNTERTOPS
 BROOKLYN
 The countertops were manufactured in Brooklyn, about 230 miles from the USGBC. The product is a mix of 100 percent recycled (and recyclable) glass and concrete and contains no VOCs. IceStone has received Gold-level Cradle to Cradle certification from MBDC.



ECO SURFACES
 LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA
 E Grip III is a floor adhesive with half as many volatile organic compounds as allowed under SCAQMD, the published standard for VOC limits.

JOHNSONITE
 CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO
 Tightlock, a rubber-based flooring, was preferred over vinyl. Its base material is rapidly renewable.

NATIONAL GYPSUM
 CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA
 The X2 Interior Gypsum has 85 percent preconsumer content, and 5 percent postconsumer. Manufactured and extracted regionally, it is also Greenguard certified.

MODULAR CARPET
LEES CARPETS
 GLASSBORO, VIRGINIA
 The Lees plant is located just 207 miles from the USGBC office. The carpet itself has 61.5 percent recycled content, plus 3 percent renewable or biobased materials. The backing is nonvinyl thermoplastic, and the entire carpet tile can be recycled into new carpet backing in a one-step process. The product is currently seeking Platinum certification under the new Sustainable Carpet Assessment guidelines.



AUTOMATIC SHADES
MECHOSHADE
 EDISON, NEW JERSEY
 The shades are programmed to be lowered on the east side of the building in the early morning and then to gradually rise as the sun moves across the sky. On the west side, they're up in the morning and then gradually lower as the sun moves west. The shades on the south face remain up for ten months of the year and start to lower incrementally about one month before the winter solstice. There's a rooftop sensor that overrides the system on cloudy days, allowing all of the shades to be up when appropriate. The shades themselves are made from a recyclable non-PVC fabric that's Cradle to Cradle certified.



PANEL FABRIC
HBF TEXTILES
 QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC
 Two years ago, Envision designed a line of eco-friendly panel fabrics for HBF textiles. The firm used one of those fabrics in the USGBC's conference rooms and breakout area. It's made of totally recycled polyester.

sophisticated look. And he's really effective at communicating what we're about."

Wilson came to think about the space as a series of "environmental stories"—episodes of sustainability that, taken together, would illustrate a moral about virtuous design. He brings up *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, the *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman's latest save-the-world treatise on global warm-

The USGBC wanted an existing structure both to save cash and because, as Rick Fedrizzi says, "there's something inherently right about recycling an old building."



ing. "His whole thing is thousands of tiny things," Wilson says. "That's like this project." Put another way, to design a truly sustainable interior, it takes a village—or at least a team of building wonks willing to check their self-regard.

They started with the site. The USGBC wanted an existing structure both to save cash and because, as Fedrizzi says, "there's something inherently right about recycling an old building." Wilson's wife, Sally, a real estate consultant who serves as the global director of environmental strategy for the megacorp CB Richard Ellis, negotiated a "green



GREEN QUALITY
Metal-panel acoustic ceiling: Geometrix, by USG, Color: flat white. Seventy percent recycled content, manufactured in Oakville, Ontario (476 miles away)

GREEN QUALITY
Conference-room tables: custom tables by Datesweiser. FSC-certified rift-cut, red-oak veneer top, 60 percent recycled content; manufactured in Buffalo, New York (292 miles away)

GREEN QUALITY
Glass film: PS2, by Llumiar Window Film. Made from polyester (which is preferred over vinyl); manufactured in Martinsville, Virginia (224 miles away)



lease,” a document that allows the space to live up to LEED standards. A low-slung edifice that had been gutted and renovated in 2007, it wasn’t the group’s first choice, but the price was right and the location ideal. It is less than half a mile of the organization’s old Perkins + Will–designed offices and of Envision Design, so everything from the planning phase to the move itself was walkable. A bonus, according to one USGBC staffer: “Everyone knows the place to go for happy hour already.”

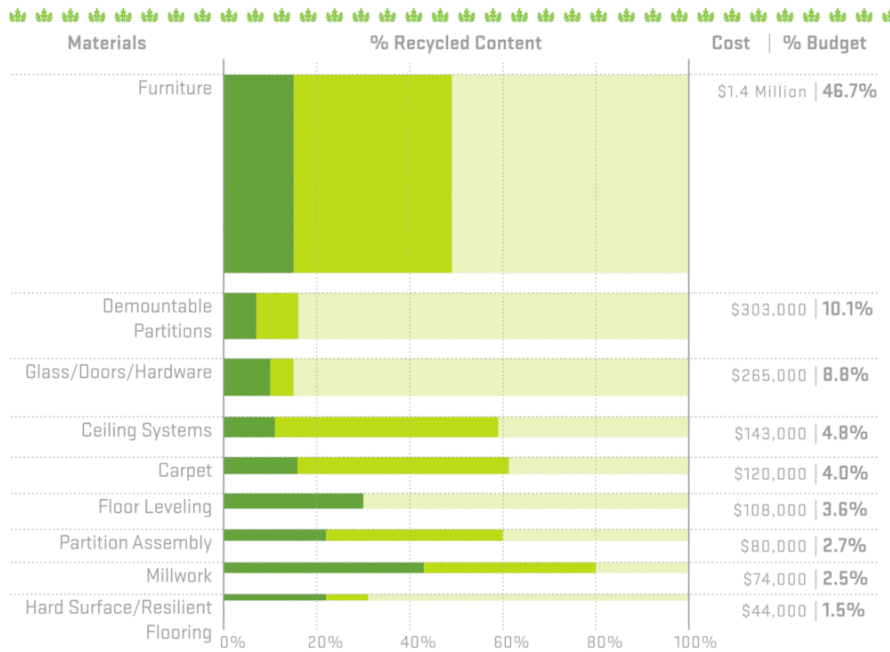
Early on, Wilson marshaled the mechani-

cal engineers, GHT Limited, eager to include them in design charrettes. He had been grappling with how to flatten the building’s inherent hierarchy (occasioned by envy-producing floor-to-ceiling glass) and considered pushing desks about eight feet from the perimeter so that everyone got a window and no one got a window—a small act of workplace socialism. The engineers then floated an idea: Why not make peripheral areas colder in the winter and hotter in the summer? “The most energy-intensive space to heat and cool is the perimeter,” says Paul O’Brien, president

CONFERENCE ROOMS

Above: The flexible conference areas subdivide into smaller rooms to accommodate the organization’s aggressive meeting schedule.

Content vs. Cost



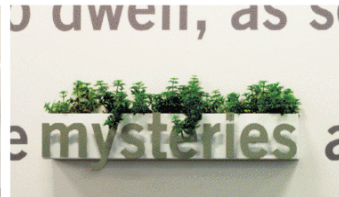
*13.3% of project materials have no recycled content

In recent years, the demand for green building materials has exploded. So the information graphic at left—measuring the percentage of recycled content in the materials used in the USGBC space—constitutes something of a progress report. Surprisingly, even in a project aiming for Platinum-plus certification, the material options in certain categories are limited and, in some cases, nonexistent.

All images courtesy Envision



A map (left and below), designed by the graphics consultant Shaw Jelveh Design, labels international chapters with an oak leaf, the organization's logo.



A tree of inspirational quotes (left) reveals the USGBC's poetic side. A small set of potted plants is incorporated into a Rachel Carson quote [above].

GREEN QUALITY
Fabric: Eco-Celtic, by Dazian Fabrics;
Ink: Eco-Subject;
Stretch-fabric panel system:
Novawall
Fabric: 100 percent recycled polyester; made from post-industrial yarns and postconsumer PET; manufactured in Greensboro, North Carolina (247 miles away). Ink: water-based ink; zero VOCs. Fabric-panel system: acoustical core has 35 percent recycled content, fabric is friction fit; no permanent fasteners for easy changes; assembled on-site

of GHT. "Why are we conditioning this space if no one is sitting there?" The temperature disparities would barely rate a shiver or a bead of sweat, and they would slash the overall energy consumption by 5 percent per degree. Thus, the office's "eco-corridor."

Lighting the place proved daunting, with great potential for energy savings and failure in equal measure. "We tried to wring out every watt," Wilson says. "We'd get people from USGBC—Brendan Owens [vice president of LEED technical development]—and go through, credit by credit, asking 'What are we going to do?' We get to lighting, and Brendan says, 'We need to cut our lighting in half.' And Rod"—Letonja, the project architect—"and I are looking at each other thinking, I can see it now. We'll be walking through the space, showing it off, and it'll look like a cave. How the hell are we ever going to be able to do this?"

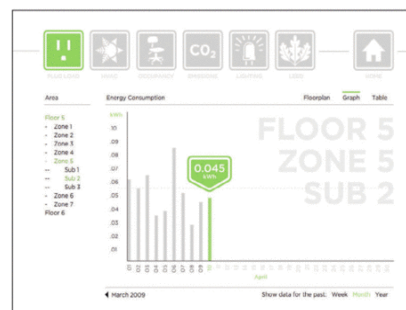
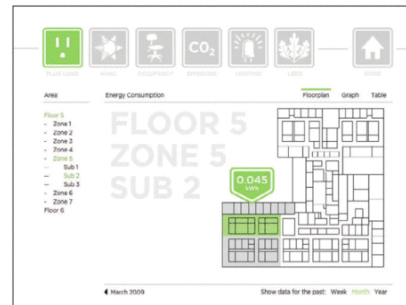
They recruited the sustainable-lighting consultants Clanton & Associates, late of LEED projects for Oberlin College and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, where they emphasized visual comfort at every turn. Together, they tossed about ideas for reducing electrical lighting without making employees feel like they were holed up in Tut's tomb. They settled on Convia, a universal-control system from Herman Miller that senses natural light and occupancy levels and adjusts

Lighting the place proved daunting, with great potential for energy savings and failure in equal measure. "We tried to wring out every watt," Wilson says.



Posted Results

Claiming to be green and actually proving it are two different things. That's why the USGBC is installing what it calls the Dashboard, a large TV monitor prominently located in the reception area. "Our space has a network of devices that capture building-performance metrics in a number of categories," says Andre Pore mski, of the USGBC. "That data is collected on a dedicated server, culled into graphs that compare it to industry benchmarks, and then displayed on the Dashboard, most of it in real time." It's very much a walk-the-walk gesture from an organization that knows it must continually prove its green credentials.



The Dashboard will display real-time building statistics in a number of categories: power and water usage, lighting, HVAC performance, CO₂ levels, and indoor air quality.

GREEN QUALITY
Stump side table:
Antique Walnut,
by CitiLogs
Salvaged wood
extracted from
Washington, D.C.,
area; finished in
natural tung oil;
manufactured
at millwork
shop in Center,
Pennsylvania
(165 miles away)

GREEN QUALITY
Lounge Pout,
by Moroso
Part of the
Saruyama Islands
collection; 100%
wool; ISO certified

Lounge

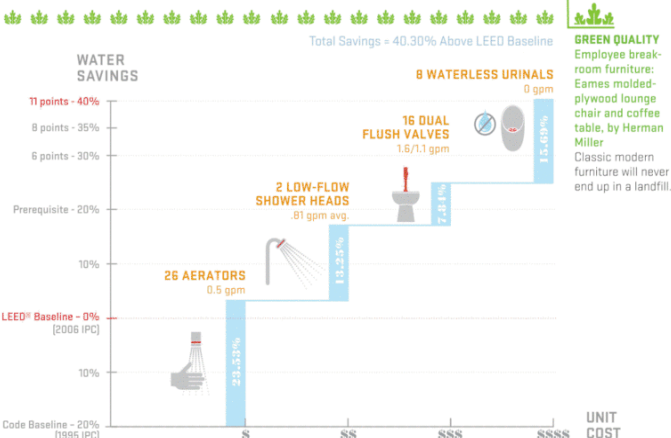


The chain-link-patterned glass partition, designed by Suzanne Tick, creates distinct social spaces without compromising views or access to daylight.

GREEN QUALITY
Plastic-laminate
millwork substrate:
Nu-Green, by
Uniboard
No added urea-
formaldehyde; 100
percent recycled
wood fiber, manu-
factured in Laval,
Quebec (492 miles
away); covered in
durable laminate
from Abet Laminati

GREEN QUALITY
Accent paint:
Natura, by
Benjamin Moore.
Colors: Brazilian
Blue, Clearest
Ocean, Iguana
Green, and
Mandarin Orange
Zero VOCs; surpasses
SCAQMD require-
ments; manufactured
in Montvale,
New Jersey
(217 miles away)

GREEN QUALITY
Bar stools: Scoop,
by Turnstone
Cradle to Cradle
Silver Certified.
23 percent recy-
cled content; 99
percent recyclable



GREEN QUALITY
Employee break-
room furniture:
Eames molded-
plywood lounge
chair and coffee
table, by Herman
Miller
Classic modern
furniture will never
end up in a landfill.

ceiling fluorescents (and even temperature) accordingly. An occupied cubicle on a sunny day will see little artificial light; at night, it'll have plenty. Light-colored carpet along the eco-corridor further brightens the space, and when the sun grows too sharp, automatic shades from MechoShade roll down. As a result, the lighting consumes about half a watt per square foot, which is 52 percent below the baseline of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers and more than meets LEED's new requirements.

Not that every collaboration worked perfectly. "From a design standpoint, the USGBC looked at the office as being very experimental," Wilson says, speaking generally. "They're the USGBC. They have to show leadership, so we needed to try things out. Some might work, some might not." Consider **continued on page 126**

GREEN QUALITY
Linoleum flooring:
Marmoleum, by
Forbo; Patterns/
colors: Gray-
Dations in Slate
Gray, and Fresco
in Silver Shadow
Forty percent
recycled content,
33 percent rapidly
renewable materials

Water Works

According to environmentalists, the next big ecological threat is access to clean water. LEED Version 3 responds to that problem by making water-conservation requirements much stricter. To earn a water-usage credit under the previous rating system, designers had to reduce baseline consumption 20 percent below the Energy Policy Act of 1992. The new baseline is considerably lower. "Under the new version, you have to reduce water by twenty percent below the new baseline as a prerequisite," Wilson says. "Meaning you have to beat the old version's baseline by forty percent just to be in the game." Here's a look at how that was achieved (and exceeded) in the new space.

Italian wool ottomans and tree-stump tables embellish the lounge (right), known among employees as the Wii Room.

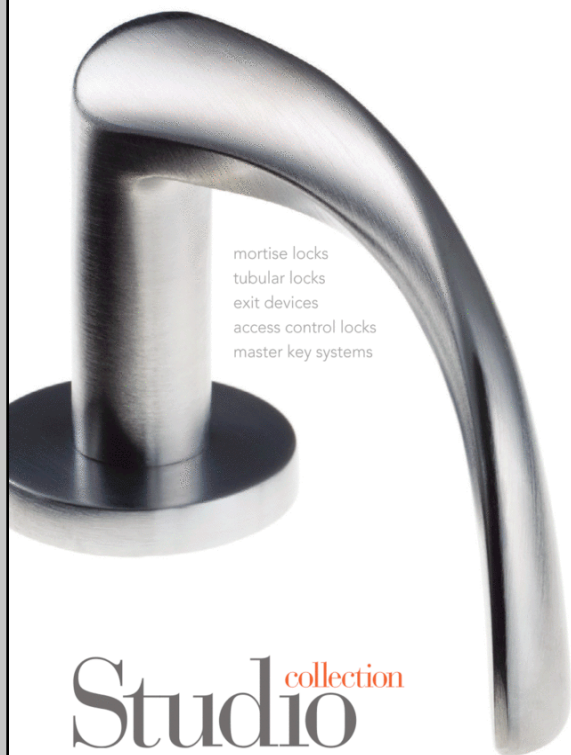


GREEN QUALITY
Colored glass:
Vanceva. Colors:
0036, 8238,
and 6266
Manufactured
in Butler,
Pennsylvania
(203 miles away)

Photos, Eric Laiguel/courtesy Envision; diagram, Criswell Lappin and Envision

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Circle 3

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ULTIMATE CLIENT

continued from page 114 the environmental prints posted on various office cubicles. Wilson coordinated with the biophilia expert Judith Heerwagen and the graphics consultants Shaw Jelveh Design to break up a boundless sea of desks with photographs of wood, honeycomb, flowers, and clouds—the kind you might find at IKEA. But they're being scaled back after employees complained about feeling walled in or put off by the imagery. (One person was particularly offended by a rather biomorphic conch shell.)

The true sex appeal, of course, is in the furnishings and finishes—the details that make 2101 L Street the temple of green design Fedrizzi so lusted after.

The true sex appeal, of course, is in the furnishings and the finishes—the details that make 2101 L Street the temple of green design Fedrizzi so lusted after. Step off the elevator and hang a left, and panels of 200- to 500-year-old gumwood recovered from the Tennessee River dress the walls. The accent recurs in the lobby, behind a pair of orange (Greenguard-certified) Womb chairs, on the USGBC medallion, which is pressed behind an open stairwell. Take another left into the anteroom (still white), and the wood repeats again, dividing glassy conference rooms that face east over central D.C. The only other decor here is a set of candy-colored Italian wool ottomans arranged haphazardly for casual seating. The ottomans, Wilson says, were “a moment of weakness”—the rare flourish that doesn't have an environmental story. Or maybe it's part of the broader story Wilson and the USGBC are trying to tell: green design doesn't have to be oblivious to aesthetics.

For employees, adjusting to the formal decor of 2101 L Street hasn't been easy. The USGBC might want to project an image of sober-minded maturity, but around the cubicles, even 30 is old. The USGBC and Shaw Jelveh worked to inject some personality into the place, arranging variegated images of LEED projects in a conference room; elsewhere, a world map pinpoints the organization's chapters. But the quote wall is perhaps the most faithful barometer of office culture. Submitted by the council's 196 employees, the quotes are taken from Jesus Christ (“Whatever thy hand findest to do, do it with all thy heart”) and his secular equivalent (“Do, or do not. There is no try.” —Yoda”). They are from the author of *The Green Collar Economy* (“It's time to stop borrowing and start building . . .”) and the mouth of a sworn enemy (“The job is ours and the job must be done. If not by us, who? If not now, when?” —Ronald Reagan”). There are seven from Mahatma Gandhi; six from Frank Lloyd Wright; five each from Barack Obama, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and E. E. Cummings; four from John Muir; and three from Dr. Seuss. Other offices have mountain retreats and trust falls. The USGBC has its quote wall. “We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars,” goes one quote from Oscar Wilde, caught in a rare instance of sounding more like Sacheen Littlefeather.

Which prompts the question: Does a corporate look suit an organization whose employees find inspiration in Van Jones? Or is that disconnect precisely the point? As much as the aesthetic seems to belie the institution's character, it's in lockstep with its mission—to spread green building far and wide. Corporations are among the last frontiers and, by dint of their size, the ideal candidates to usher in change. With its new office, the USGBC is turning itself into a billboard for the idea that green business practices extend beyond a few recycling bins and a company-sponsored Earth Day picnic; they penetrate all corners of office life, from carpeting and desk lamps to the very process by which the space is designed. Efficiency and collaboration are the new watchwords, ideas that both green activists and corporate suits can embrace. “We're putting together technologies that are already in existence but have never been quite assembled in this way,” Wilson says. “We're not a hundred percent sure how everything is going to turn out, but we want to be able to tell this story to all kinds of people.” The lesson is right there on the wall: “To move the world, we must first move ourselves.” www.metropolismag.com