

Checklist for green homebuyers

- ▶ Does the project offer ready access to public transportation so as to reduce the need for private transport?
- ▶ Does it use fixtures that facilitate lower water consumption?
- ▶ Are the systems and fixtures used in common-area lighting systems certified as energy-efficient?
- ▶ Does the project have solar water heaters, sewage treatment plants, rainwater harvesting and water recycling-reuse features?
- ▶ Does it feature natural ventilation, so as to reduce the need for airconditioning?
- ▶ Does it have adequate open spaces and green areas?
- ▶ Does it offer covered car parking?
- ▶ Does it have sustainable waste disposal features?

Homebuyers interested in eco-friendly housing must ensure that competent authorities—like GRIHA—have certified the project they are buying into as ‘green building’, as there are any number of projects flaunting green credentials without following ‘green norms.’

TEAM TIMES PROPERTY writes



BE AWARE. GO GREEN!

Many experts say that going by the pace at which urbanization is taking place in the country, it will become unsustainable if the natural resources are not used properly.

Juggy Marwaha, the MD of Jones Lang LaSalle, global consultancy firm, says that the tremendous rate of real estate development across the globe, especially in young, emerging nations, is imposing immense pressure on the environment and its natural resources.

He said that with such rapid development, there is a lot at stake when we look at important factors like energy availability and environmental sustainability.

Experts say that water riots, in particular, would become commonplace in the next couple of decades if this resource is not managed properly.

Similarly, energy would become too costly even for middle-class people, they say. **On an average, buildings consume about 20% of the total energy available in a country, and this trend is increasing with every passing day.** Therefore, experts and consultant say that it is better to prepare for these exigencies in advance.

Mounting concern over the environmental impact of real estate has necessitated the formulation of sustainable solutions.

This has led to the advent of ‘sustainable real estate’ and related ‘green homes’ concepts, Marwaha says.

Sustainable real estate is all about using resources optimally and addressing the demands of the present without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

But, many builders use it as a unique selling proposition (USP) without adhering to green norms. Therefore, Marwaha says that buyers should do the realty check before falling into developers’ trap. At the same time, paying a premium for a genuine green building is advisable.

Marwaha says green houses or eco-friendly homes are an integrated approach towards minimizing the adverse effects of construction, and its operation on the environment, and promoting healthier living for people.

It has been extensively documented that living in conventional buildings has been working against residents—in terms of living standards and cost (excessive energy consumption)—Marwaha said.

The key to eco-friendly homes is limiting the use of scarce resources like water, energy, and the materials used during construction and occupation. The idea is to incorporate features that make the most of natural resources like light and water while reducing heat gain and improving the quality of indoor air.

Green buildings not only enhance quality of life but also reduce the cost of living, as these buildings involve significantly lower consumption of energy, water, and other resources. **The first and foremost constraint in the proliferation of green buildings in India is the lack of information and incorrect perception.**

Marwaha says that it is generally believed that green build-

ings cost more and take a long time to pay back in tangible energy savings. Such a perception leads to lower demand levels from the larger buyer base. In fact, the additional cost factor is rapidly reducing as more and more developers get into the ‘green homes’ arena, since there is increased competition.

Also, green homes result in significantly reduced utility bills right from the beginning.

Also, many developers are deterred from adopting the ‘green mantra’ in their projects because green buildings may involve increased construction costs. They may also find it challenging to obtain the necessary technologies, source green building materials, and find appropriately qualified architects and contractors in India.

However, many authorities like Noida authority and Greater Noida authority have given an additional 5 percentage points in construction rights to the developers who are constructing green projects.

Besides, developers are aware that the ‘green wave’ is catching the fancy of more and more homebuyers in India and they too want to get on to the bandwagon.

Unfortunately, this has resulted in a lot of residential projects which style themselves as ‘green’ without adhering to all the mandatory parameters or having obtained the necessary certification, Marwaha says.

The overall benefits of green buildings depend on the extent to which sustainable features are included during the initial planning and design. In some cases, such features can also be incorporated after the building is complete. But the

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RESIDENTIAL APTS: DELHI/NCR

LOCALITY	PRICE RANGE ₹/Sq FEET
Defence Colony	27800 to 35700
Panchsheel Enclave	20600 to 26750
Panchshila Park	22550 to 29400
Sarvapriya Vihar	20250 to 25600
Vasant Vihar	26800 to 36150

GURGAON

Golf Course Road	12000 to 14750
Gurgaon-Faridabad Road	7450 to 9100
Sohna Road	7650 to 9850

NOIDA

Sector-44	11550 to 14150
Sector-50	7100 to 8800
Sector-61	7050 to 8100
Sector-92	7250 to 8250

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point is that a few green features do not qualify a building as environmentally sustainable, Marwaha says.

Because of the increasing interest in this concept shown by homebuyers, many developers have begun promoting projects under the banner of ‘eco-friendly homes’. While many of these projects are indeed certified by competent authorities, others are merely seeking to get on to the popular bandwagon without actually delivering the goods.

To ensure that a genuinely ‘green’ residential project is not mistaken for one of the many wannabes, it is important for their developer to obtain accreditation from the green rating systems followed in India.

GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment) is one such system which verifies whether a building has adhered to all the prescribed parameters, and that the required materials and processes have been used at every stage of construction. Once all the requirements are met, the project is certified as a ‘green building’.



▶ GREEN BUILDINGS NOT ONLY ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE BUT ALSO REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING, AS THESE BUILDINGS INVOLVE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER CONSUMPTION OF ENERGY, WATER, AND OTHER RESOURCES

▶ SUSTAINABLE REAL ESTATE IS ALL ABOUT USING RESOURCES OPTIMALLY AND ADDRESSING THE DEMANDS OF THE PRESENT WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE ABILITY OF FUTURE GENERATIONS TO MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS