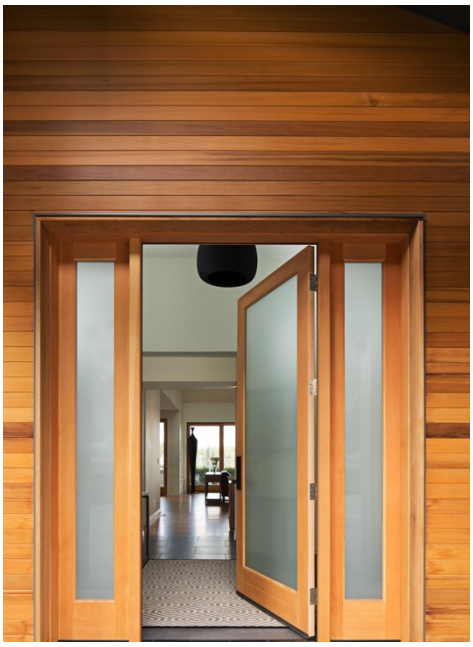
Are you asking enough of your home?

Your home already does a lot for you – it provides shelter, one of the basic human needs, as well as countless other benefits. A home is a place to live, study, work or connect with family and friends. We may cook and eat meals, pursue hobbies, store sentimental items, and find respite in our homes, among countless other activities. But even though it may seem like your home already does a lot, most of these features have been components of human homes for centuries. In the 21st century, it's time to ask yourself, what else is my home capable of? In the green building world people often talk about the big four: comfort, durability, health and efficiency. Recently resilience has been added to that list, a nod to climate change and the growing need to buffer our homes against it. But what do those mean to you and how do they impact your daily life?



The entry of our Toward Net Zero Project on Lake Whatcom.

Comfort

Can you walk barefoot through your home year-round, or do you reach for your slippers in October? If you're reaching for your slippers in October, your home doesn't meet our definition of comfort. High-performance homes are designed and built to eliminate drafts and cold spots and create a consistent environment through the home.

Durability

It rains a lot in Bellingham. Have you ever wondered how your siding manages to keep the rest of your home dry? Although it may seem like a bit of a mystery, in fact it's building science and we're building nerds. Because water will inevitably get behind the siding, it needs an escape route otherwise it will cause issues like mold or rot. Whenever we replace siding, we install a rainscreen. Unfortunately, rainscreens are a newer building practice and are not required by code in Washington, which means that your home may very well not have one. Rainscreens increase the durability of a home's siding and they help to protect indoor air quality by preventing moisture damage that can lead to costly repairs over time.

Health

The mechanical room at the Bright Green Project, a high - performance, new home on South Hill in Bellingham.

Do you cook at home? And shower? And own furniture? I'm going to assume that you said yes to all of these questions, which means you likely have pollutants in your home. Did you know that the air quality in homes is, on average, 2-5 times worse than outdoor air? Let that sink in. The air in our homes could very well be making us sick. These pollutants come from activities like cooking and showering and from products like couches, mattresses and carpet and are made worse by inadequate ventilation. While we have an extensive toolkit to address and improve indoor air quality, the plan always starts with increasing ventilation to bring fresh air in and carry indoor air pollutants out.

Efficiency

Even though we live and breathe this topic, I'm willing admit that not everyone that reads this post is totally fired up about reducing their carbon footprint. For some of us it's not a top priority. For others it is. Wherever you fall on that spectrum, however, we'd love to work with you because reducing your carbon footprint isn't just about doing right by the planet, it also means saving you money. If it was a math equation it might look something like this:

increased efficiency = increased energy savings = reduced carbon footprint

And let's be honest, most of us would be happy to save on our monthly utility bill! We increase the efficiency of your home by analyzing the current building envelope using a variety of methods, identifying the areas where heat is being lost and then insulating and air-sealing as needed.

Key take-aways

There are significant disparities between a code-built home and a high-performance home. High-performance homes are more comfortable, last longer, use less energy. They also require fewer repairs, have healthier indoor air quality are quieter than standard code-built home. Let’s do better for you, for your family and for the planet by asking more of your home.