



Leed-Certified Home: The (Almost) All-American Home Shows What'S Possible For Sustainable Living

The Platinum LEED-certified home shows that everything's bigger in Texas—even environmentally-friendly ideas.

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Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified homes go the extra mile when it comes to eco-friendly design and energy efficiency. And some homes go an extra ten miles. Lantz Full Circle, the architecture and development studio that created The (Almost) All-American Home in Houston, Texas, writes on its website: “Sustainable architecture is more than a checklist—it is the holistic pursuit of healthy environments, which are as much about materiality and vitality as space.” Guess everything is bigger in Texas—even visions for a better world. It's no wonder this 3,600 square-foot Platinum Certified LEED residence is considered a modern-day reimaging of a fairytale dream home. From Deconstruction to Construction When Karen Lantz purchased the lot in 2002, she noticed that most of the surrounding original 1950s Houston ranch-style homes had been destroyed, their materials sent to rot in

landfills. Lantz decided to forge her own green path through mindfully deconstructing the existing house. She dismantled and recycled or donated 99% of the materials to charity. She then used the \$60,000 tax deduction to ceremoniously kick off the new project. Not too shabby. Building Materials LEED certification requires all building materials and appliances to be sourced within a strict 500-mile radius. The (Almost) All-American Home is largely constructed of long-lasting Texas-made materials—limestone, terrazzo and metal siding—and is a nod architecturally to Houston’s own traditional mid-1900s design. This is actually where the home’s name comes from—“New York Times” journalist Mimi Swartz covered the team’s early stages of construction, dubbing it “The (Almost) All-American Home” in reference to its enviable mission of sustainability and exclusively locally-sourced materials. Outdoor Beauty According to Lantz, “The food and air one ingests are as integral to the principles of sustainable architecture as the spaces one inhabits.” That’s why the front yard includes an early-1900s Victory Gardens-inspired 650-square-foot urban garden. Its vegetables and herbs are nourished by a strategic solar orientation and rainwater irrigation system and fed to the surrounding community. The home also boasts a porch, courtyard, roof terrace, stoop and poolside lounge for maximum enjoyment of the great outdoors. The design sought “a convivial yet intimate framework for domestic life and local flavor in this sprawling subtropical cosmopolis,” after all. Energy Efficiency The home consumes 67% less energy than a conventional but comparably sized house. It is 100% lit by LED lighting, with its lamps reportedly set to last 100,000 hours—around 22 years at 50% operation. The home is well positioned to minimize summer heat while maximizing natural sunlight. It is topped by a large photovoltaic solar panel array that provides up to 33% of the home’s electricity and even doubles as a shady canopy and outdoor shelter. The home’s hot water and outdoor pool are both heated by a roof-mounted solar collector. There are currently two electric car chargers in the home’s carport, minimizing the owners’ carbon footprint while cruising around town in style. Rainwater Collection The (Almost) All-American home is equipped with a 1,400-gallon rainwater-storing underground cistern, with 60% of the entire roof surface area harvesting rainwater. The home’s high-efficiency fixtures, zero-turf lawn and native drought-tolerant plants require little water, but the urban farm does sometimes receive a burst of irrigation from a highly efficient system. A Leader In Sustainability Said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO & Founding Chair of the U.S. Green Building Council as quoted on the home’s website: “The work of innovative building projects such as The (Almost) All-American Home is a fundamental driving force in the green building movement. This project efficiently uses our natural resources and makes an immediate, positive impact on our planet, which will tremendously benefit future generations to come. While climate change is a global problem, innovative companies like Lantz Full Circle are addressing it through local solutions.” This home is regarded as a “reimagined dreamhouse” because it simultaneously exists both in the immediate and in the future, challenging developers around the world to believe that anything is possible today in order to have a better tomorrow. *If you're interested in learning more about the specifics of [LEED-certification](#), take a look at [USGBC's Guide to Certification](#).*