

Sidwell Friends School, Washington, DC: A Beacon of Light in the Nation's Capital



Informed by Quaker values, Sidwell Friends School is committed to practicing responsible environmental stewardship and works to tread lightly on the earth. For these reasons, the decision was made to construct a new green middle school. This school achieved the LEED Platinum certification in March 2007. They aimed for LEED certification because school leaders felt that the international recognition of

a LEED designation helps to advance the green building movement. According to the Associate Head of School's Office, Lori Ito Hardenbergh, the school chose to become LEED Platinum certified because "being located in the nation's capital, the school is highly visible and can serve as a beacon of light to schools, churches and institutions everywhere who are trying to green their buildings."

Sidwell's Middle school is the first K-12 school in the United States to have a LEED Platinum rating and the first LEED Platinum building in the District of Columbia. The building was constructed to utilize local and recycled materials. Seventy-eight percent of the materials used in construction were manufactured regionally, coming from within a five hundred mile radius. Eleven percent of the building materials came from recycled materials and wood certified by the forest stewardship council was used. The middle school uses sixty percent less energy by utilizing energy efficiency techniques and a passive solar design. Five percent of the school's energy is harvested from the sun through a photovoltaic array on the rooftop.



The school grounds are also a testament to Sidwell's stewardship ethic. A constructed wetland and green roof create habitats for plant and animal life while treating wastewater and rainwater for reuse. Further, water efficient landscaping reduces the need for fertilizer and irrigation.

Sidwell is committed to green building and according to Ito Hardenbergh, "All future projects will seek LEED certification." The lower school Groome addition and Gym was completed in 2007 and it is expected to receive LEED Gold certification. In fall 2008, Sidwell will begin construction on a new underground athletics facility on their Wisconsin Avenue campus, as well as the renovation of their existing Arts Center and Kenworthy Gym which will become a Quaker meetinghouse and arts facility. Sidwell Friends School will seek a LEED rating for both projects.

In order to be a "beacon of light" within the community, Sidwell offers tours of the campus. Thus far, they have given over 3,000 tours to school groups, non-profit groups, government agencies, and architects. Each year, in October, they participate in the solar homes tour which is open to the community. For more information on Sidwell School's green building program see http://www.sidwell.edu/about_sfs/greenbuilding.asp.