

## Neveh Shalom to Receive Silver LEED Certification for New Stampfer Chapel and Administration Building



Neveh Shalom

In 2007, Congregation Neveh Shalom realized the need for a bigger and more functional space. The original Neveh Shalom shul and campus was completed in 1962 with the intention of serving approximately 500 families. Since that time, the physical campus of the shul and campus had not been remodeled at all, while Neveh Shalom's community had grown to include over 1,000 families. Thus, Neveh Shalom set out to add another chapel, which will accommodate up to 250 people, and a new administration building. They also set out to make renovations on many parts of the older building. An important element of the project was to construct these

new buildings with as little impact to the environment, now and in the future, as possible. Fred Rothstein, executive director of the Neveh Shalom campaign, was very pleased with architect Henry Fitzgibbons' "green" plans for the new additions, noting that the green addition will help to accommodate the growing number of families that belong to Neveh Shalom and will also contribute to Neveh Shalom's mission of hospitality and care for the community. A quote from the Talmud became a guiding light for the project:

*An old man was planting a sapling by the side of the road when a stranger stopped and asked, "Why are you planting a tree at your age? It will be many years before it provides fruit and shade. You may not live to enjoy it." The man replied, "All my life I have enjoyed food and shade provided by those who came before me. As my ancestors planted for me, I plant now for my children and my children's children."*

— The Talmud

**The Architects:** Soderstrom Architects of Portland, Oregon worked with Congregation Neveh Shalom on this project. The group has a long legacy of architectural design with a sustainable focus. Their first green project was completed in 1982 with the construction of Sunridge middle school in Pendleton, Oregon. They boast three certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) architects and the firm has completed many LEED certified projects. Soderstrom Architects is recognized nationally for its strong portfolio of projects including schools, universities, and religious buildings. Henry Fitzgibbons was the lead architect on the new Stampfer Chapel and administration

building. The addition to Neveh Shalom will further their expertise in the LEED design and building process.

**Construction:** Congregation Neveh Shalom's Stampfer Chapel, along with renovations to existing buildings, nears completion after eight months of construction. General contractor S.D. Deacon of Portland hopes to complete the project by September 2008. Construction began in November of 2007 and included the addition of the 14,000 sq. ft. Stampfer Chapel and new administration building along with renovations to Neveh Shalom's religious school, pre-school, and sanctuary. The construction is expected to achieve silver LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.



*New Stampfer Chapel*

In addition to new classrooms and offices, the new administration building will provide Neveh Shalom with a lobby and reception space and improve security by allowing staff to see who enters and exits the building.

The renovations will include equipping the main sanctuary with all-new seating, lighting, and carpeting. Birnbach Hall will be renovated with new flooring, lighting, and a higher ceiling. These will be the first renovations to the old sanctuary building since 1989.



*New Administration Building*

**LEED Silver Certification:** Architect Henry Fitzgibbons was able to incorporate many state-of-the-art cost saving and environmentally friendly features into the new chapel and old building renovations. This was done both to mitigate high operational costs and to better care for the environment. Only low-impact materials were used in the construction of the Stampfer Chapel. This means that taking solely the construction into account, the Stampfer Chapel is already greener than its conventional counterparts. Ninety-five percent of the construction materials were reused on other areas of the renovations or were recycled.

Allowing natural light into the building was among the main objectives of the design. All new offices in the administration building were built along the outside walls to allow for large windows to let in the sun. The offices have sufficient natural lighting to minimize the use of artificial light during the day. When light is needed in the offices and elsewhere in the chapel, L.E.D. lights, which are occupant sensitive, will illuminate the area. L.E.D. lights are even more efficient than CFL lights and can last up to 60,000 hours.

Water conservation is another important aspect of the design. Low flow fixtures were installed where possible making the new administration and chapel building 25% more water efficient than conventional buildings. Rain water gardens were also installed around the new chapel. These are gardens nearly ten feet deep that serve to catch most of the rain water coming off of the roof of nearby buildings. This helps to keep rivers clean and reduces the chance of combined sewer overflow. Flow-through planters, which serve the same purpose as rain water gardens, were also installed wherever

rain water gardens could not be placed. In addition, the amount of pavement for parking was reduced and the pavement was made permeable allowing the ground around Neveh Shalom to absorb more rain water and reducing storm water runoff.

Overall, the new chapel and administration offices were made 25% more energy efficient than the Oregon energy code requires. All of these energy and water efficient designs along with a few others helped the Stampfer Chapel and the new administration building receive silver LEED certification.

**Fundraising:** The new additions and renovations called for funds of \$7 million with an additional \$2 million for new operating costs. Overall, the project cost a little over \$9 million. As of now, \$7.2 million, approximately 79%, of the \$9 million capital campaign project cost has been met through a number of private donations from its members and the surrounding community. The project took advantage of the Business Energy Tax Credit Pass Through from Oregon Department of Energy and incentives from Energy Trust of Oregon to reduce the costs of energy-saving measures and construction.

Many congregations and synagogues are starting to turn to “green” building techniques for additions and renovations. Neveh Shalom is one of the first synagogues in the Portland area to incorporate green building principles in a renovation and new building and continues to set an example in the Jewish community as a leader in environmental concern.

*Based on information from The Jewish Review and the website of Neveh Shalom. Written for OIPL by Ben Burnett.*