



About Helga B. Lilley

Over the years Helga has designed homes in vastly different regions and climates – a log home on a lake in New Hampshire, several homes on the island of Nevis in the Caribbean, and her own home in the Lowcountry of South Carolina. This latest home has earned the Earthcraft House™ Platinum certification, the highest ‘green’ certification awarded by Earthcraft House. In addition, the house was a winner in the 2009 myMarvin Architect’s Challenge design competition.

Most recently Helga has been working on a sustainable mixed-use development to be built on Hilton Head Island and is active as a member of the Architectural Review Board in her community.

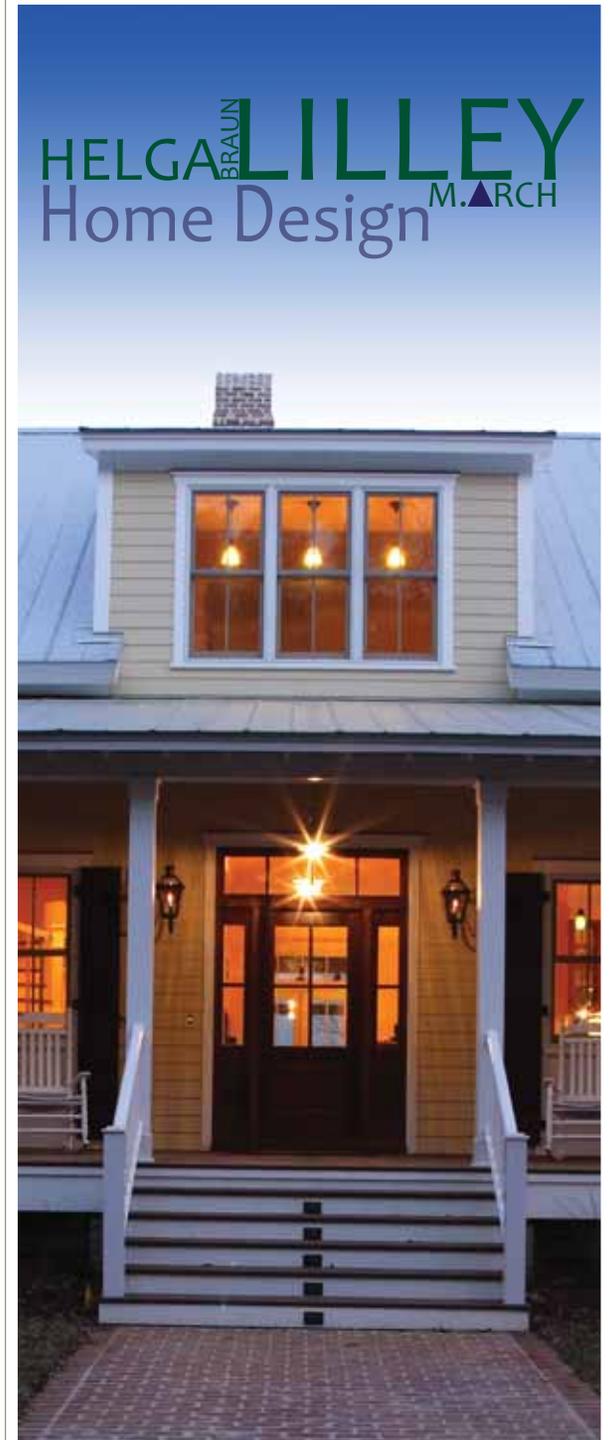


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Building 'green' - is it for you?

Rising energy costs and the depletion of natural resources are primary reasons for building 'green'. But many people are reluctant to attempt it for a variety of reasons – they think they'll end up with a house that's unattractive and uncomfortable to live in, they think they'll need to give up some of the conveniences they're used to, or they think they can't afford it. In reality, today's green house is often a more appealing house than its extravagant neighbors and offers its owners much lower utility and maintenance costs over the years. Helga can help you design the home that fits your site and your lifestyle, and delivers lifelong 'green' benefits as well.

What is 'green design'?

Energy efficient

Energy efficiency doesn't need to mean turning the thermostat down in the winter and up in the summer. A home with very few air leaks – a 'tight building envelope' – and good insulation will go a long way toward maintaining a comfortable temperature, ensuring that your heating and cooling system works less hard and uses less fuel (be it oil, electricity, natural gas, or wood). And if your home is designed to take advantage of its site, it will make the most of its solar orientation and the prevailing wind direction. Careful planning of windows and overhangs lets sun in when you want it and minimizes it when you don't. Designing for good cross-ventilation will eliminate the need for both heating and cooling in temperate seasons. Of course, it's also important to consider efficient use of space. A good design will accommodate your lifestyle and needs without wasting space that must still be conditioned and maintained.



Sustainable

There are now many options for wonderful building products that are made from renewable resources or recycled materials. Local products are also a great choice, as they eliminate the need for transportation fuel (and cost!). And whatever you choose, it's important to consider maintenance over time – if you can avoid frequent painting, for example, you've saved on materials and labor.

Manufactured components, such as SIPs (structural insulated panels), allow for greater efficiency of material usage than is possible on a job site. On the factory floor, materials can be planned and laid out to minimize waste, and scraps can be re-purposed.

Being respectful of the building site is important, too. It can be a challenge, but well worth the effort, to preserve trees and other natural features of your lot. Taking advantage of mature existing trees can not only enhance the beauty of your home, but also help cool it in the hot summer months. Consider minimizing the hardscape areas around your home, opting instead for permeable surfaces that will allow stormwater to be absorbed rather than running off, causing flooding and erosion.



Healthy

Because an efficient house is a tight house, it's important to have a good ventilation system that brings in fresh air. But you don't want to lose the heating or cooling when the air leaves the house. An ERV (energy recovery ventilator) can exchange the air by recapturing the energy from the exiting air and transferring it to the fresh air being drawn in.

Interior finishes are also important to consider. Helga can help you choose paints and stains that don't 'off-gas' – release chemicals into the air – long after they are dry.



Beautiful

You're going to live in this house – you should love it! Design matters, from basic layout to the smallest detail. Let's work together to design the house that delights you every time you come home.