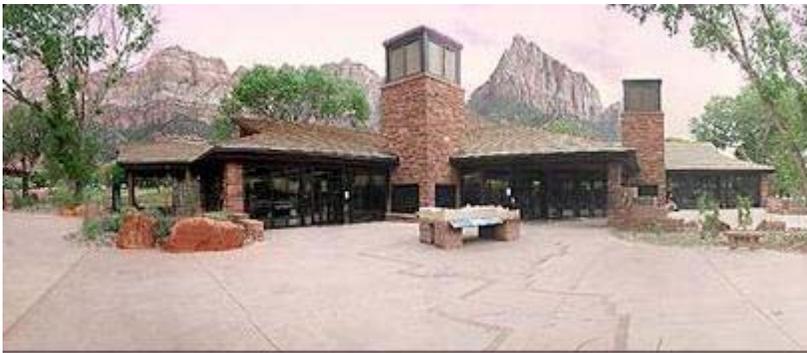


Defining Green Building

The green building movement has its roots in the energy crisis of the 1970s and the creative approaches to saving energy that came with it, including the use of active and passive solar design and tighter building envelopes. Today, as a holistic approach in which energy remains a critical component, green design also considers other environmental impacts as they relate to sustainability.¹ Thus, green building requires an integrated design approach: focusing on only one component of a building can have unintended environmental, social, or economic consequences. For example, poorly designed energy efficient building envelopes can result in poor indoor environmental quality. And, some recycled content latex paint could have higher volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions than other environmentally preferable paints. An interdisciplinary team is thus necessary to build a green building.



Zion National Park Visitor Center in Springville, Utah is a sustainable building that incorporates the area's natural features and energy-efficient building concepts into an attractive design that saves energy and operating expenses while protecting the environment.

For the purposes of this report, OFEE defines green building as the practice of (1) increasing the efficiency with which buildings and their sites use energy, water, and materials, and (2) reducing building impacts on human health and the environment, through better siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal—the complete building life cycle.

¹ Truly sustainable design recognizes the environmental, economic, and social aspects of building. While this report focuses on the *environmental* “leg” of this three-legged stool, the concepts are closely interrelated and the Federal government is approaching many design challenges with *sustainability* in mind.