

How green is your home?



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Amid rising costs of electricity and water, a growing demand for properties with green features is seeing home buyers prepared to pay a premium for energy and resource-efficient homes.

"It is estimated homes with 'green' features such as solar, grey water systems, rain water collection tanks, boreholes and waterwise gardens may command a price premium of approximately 5-10% over similar 'non-green' homes." Anthony Stroebel, Pam Golding Properties head of real estate services & a director of the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA)

The recent drought, reintroduction of load shedding by Eskom and rapidly escalating costs of electricity and water have made homes with green, resource-efficient features increasingly appealing to home buyers, says Pam Golding Properties.

In a recent survey conducted among their real estate agents, 70% of respondents estimated that homes with 'green' features such as solar, grey water systems, rain water collection tanks, boreholes and waterwise gardens may command a price premium of approximately 5-10% over similar 'non-green' homes. The participating agents also said they are experiencing heightened interest from buyers in the green properties of a home.

Says Anthony Stroebel, Pam Golding Properties head of real estate services and a director of the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA): "Nowhere is this trend towards homes with alternative, more efficient sources of energy and water more evident than in the Western Cape, where the recent prolonged drought has made water conservation a key imperative both now and into the future.

"It has also underlined the additional value placed on these features, with many consumers doing their utmost to go partially off the grid, in some cases even entirely. Almost overnight it's become relatively commonplace in Cape Town to see lawns replaced with indigenous shrubbery and succulent gardens, as well as artificial grass, not to mention a proliferation of water storage tanks and rooftop solar panels."

Energy audit reveals detailed electricity usage

"With rising utilities costs and an emphasis on sustainability, there's a major green revolution rapidly unfolding, and in support of a more sustainable future, Pam Golding Properties has partnered with Enel X, the multinational alternative energy company, to bring innovative power solutions to home owners and home buyers via an energy audit. Initially this is being offered to selected suburbs in the Western Cape and Gauteng on a pilot basis, with a national roll-out envisaged for next year.

"During the audit, energy inefficiencies in the home and intervention opportunities are identified. This consists of an on-site inspection coupled with the installation of data-reading, on-site metering which then results in an energy profile on how to reduce consumption and adopt more efficient technologies and alternative sources of electricity – tailor-made to suit your home and requirements."

The Enel X energy audit includes a full evaluation of the home's energy usage, with the installation of metering equipment to monitor appliances, geyser, pool pumps et al over a period of weeks. At the end of this, the technical team analyses the results and provides a diagnostic report with recommendations of ways to reduce your consumption over both the short and long term.

Adds Stroebel: "Just as one example, findings may reveal that an old refrigerator is consuming as much as 30% of your electricity bill. By the end of the audit process and installation of energy-efficient solutions, you could achieve up to a 70% reduction in your electricity consumption resulting in considerable cost savings."

Green Home Assessment

In the Cape, the Western Cape Government in partnership with the City of Cape Town and GreenCape, has developed a Green Home Assessment tool which is a voluntary resource which can be used for all residential units. The aim is to inform potential buyers of the efficiency measures that have been implemented in the home and the potential savings these can provide.

Last year (2017), the Western Cape Government, partnering with Pam Golding Properties, ran a pilot to test the Green Home Assessment via their agents.

Says Stroebel: "The feedback was incredibly positive, with buyers and sellers finding it a useful tool as this province becomes increasingly resource-efficient."

Newbuild green homes springing up

Stroebel says apart from homeowners who are retro-fitting their homes with green features, new builds are increasingly green, through the construction

of apartments in green precincts and apartments and freehold properties in eco-estates.

Menlyn Maine in Tshwane Municipality is Africa's first green city, created in an environment that future generations can enjoy – with green buildings, sustainable materials, efficient design and much more. Based on an innovative urban design concept that aims to create a positive shift in how South Africans live, work and play, this precinct has been developed with sustainability and environmental consciousness at its core. It was designed and developed with accessibility, walkability, tranquillity and vibrancy in mind, providing a new approach to city living in Pretoria.

As a partner of the Clinton Climate Initiative, this is one of only 16 green cities around the world and the only one in Africa. In line with the exceptional sustainability benchmarks, all buildings in the precinct are rated 4 Green Stars by the Green Building Council of South Africa.

Says Retha Schutte, Pam Golding Properties regional executive in Pretoria, whose offices are situated in Menlyn Maine: "This is a space where everyone can get to where they need to be on foot, whether for work, home or entertainment and leisure. This is achieved through designated bicycle lanes, wide pavements, easy access to public transport, parking and accessibility for disabled persons and even special blocks with grooves and buttons to guide blind pedestrians.

"In so doing the developers have created a unique culture of closeness and community through spacious parks, vibrant piazzas, as well as familiar boutique style retailers and other shared facilities."

Stroebel concludes: "To quote the mantra of the GBCSA, this is all about creating an environment where people and planet can thrive!"

For further information on a green audit contact Pam Golding Properties on 021 7101700 or [email](#) head office.

For further information on Menlyn Maine contact Pam Golding Properties Pretoria office on 012 3659000 or [email](#) us.