

# Book Review

*Ecohouse*, by Susan Roaf, 2008, 3rd. ed., Architectural Press, U.K. ISBN 0 7506 4904 6. Paperback.  
—Reviewed by David McIntire

Green building as an architectural theory has long been with us, and has become increasingly commonplace in modern building design, encompassing environmental, economical, and political thought perhaps more than any other architectural design in recent history. It is within these parameters that Sue Roaf, educator and leader in the green building movement, has released now the third edition of *Ecohouse*.

This edition builds on the first two editions; and it contains the introductions to the previous editions to supplement the introduction at the beginning of this book.

*Ecohouse* provides a fairly thorough overview of the building design process, from the big picture of a building's form and soul, to the more specific features such as energy creation and use. Perhaps the most significant portion of the book are the many case studies which comprise a third of the book.

This edition showed significant promise, but it did disappoint on several key levels that should be addressed in any future editions, if they should be successful.

Although many graphics were clear and concise, the majority seemed to be poor-quality, pixelated copies of charts and drawings taken from other sources with little care given to the quality of reproduction.

Far too many of the captions were too blurry to read and the graphics too distorted to convey the author's intended message. The geographic distribution of the audience to whom this book will be useful is largely limited to hot weather climates. This is obviously not a problem for those living in relatively close proximity to the equator, but for those who desire



applicability beyond 40 degrees of latitude, this book is of little use. Finally, and certainly the most off-putting, was the ceaseless tirade of an environmentally driven political agenda, which could perhaps be expected, given the title of the book. Sadly, the author chose to go too far by giving in to that tired, old diatribe which will only appeal to the rapidly diminishing few who still cling to the man-made global warming theory.

Overall, this book does contain some architectural food for thought, but it fails in terms of its unacceptable print quality, limited geographic relevance, and an incessantly annoying, and ultimately unforgivable environmental and political

tirade at the expense of a scientific treatment of "eco-architecture" which would have made this a great book.

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