



Letter from the Editor:

Truly green construction starts with green demolitions. This phase offers many opportunities for builders to recycle and reuse existing building materials. By systematically dismantling a structure, existing materials can be separated out for recycling, reuse and possibly even return to the manufacturer. Programs are being developed, including the [Lifecycle Building Challenge](#), to encourage the design of building materials and components that anticipate future reuse. Read on for more discussion of green demolitions.

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Demolition Waste Accounts for the Majority of Construction Waste in Landfills

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over 188 million tons of construction waste was generated in 2007 alone and 91% of that waste was demolitions and renovation material. In North Carolina, construction waste comprises about 33% of the total waste stream or about 3.7 million tons. These numbers can be significantly reduced by practicing green demolition techniques.

What is Green Demolition?

Rather than taking a wrecking ball to a structure and hauling the resulting debris to the landfill, green demolitions take a more systematic approach. Before the demolition process begins, a plan is developed to identify materials that will be reused and those that will be recycled. Once the demolition begins, crews dismantle the building, usually from the inside out, removing wiring, mechanical systems, glass, flooring and structural materials like steel and aluminum. Some materials that are not reused, such as copper and steel, can be sold as scrap to offset costs. To read about current commercial construction projects which implemented green demolition plans, click [here](#).

LEED Rating System Rewards Green Demolitions

The United States Green Building Council (USGBC), the agency which oversees the LEED program gives credits towards new projects that divert at least 50% of construction and demolition waste from landfills, with additional credit given to projects which divert 75% or more. Also, the USGBC awards LEED points to remodel projects that retain at least 75% of existing walls, roofs or floors are part of the renovation or upfit process. Projects that retain at least 95% of existing structural materials earn more LEED points. The [Bronx Library](#) is an example of a LEED structure which recycled 90% of demolition debris.

Green Building News is brought to you by Accent Construction, a full service commercial general contractor focused on providing environmentally-friendly tenant finish for office buildings and medical facilities. Their expertise in reuse/recycle efforts affords clients cost effective and innovative solutions.

Accent is the only general contractor in the state of North Carolina to be awarded EPA Waste Wise partner status and is the winner of the [2008 Small Business Partner of the Year](#). Accent is the only commercial general contractor in North Carolina engaged in separating building materials for recycling and reuse on a consistent basis.

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