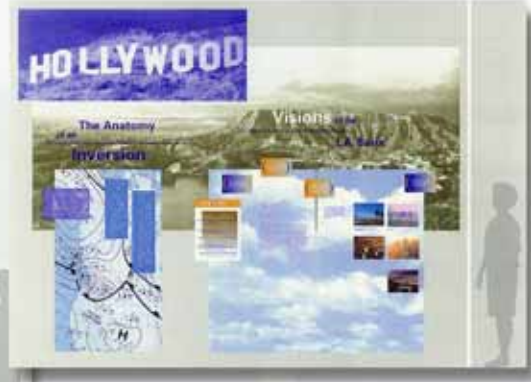




*A Home Like
This Is a Natural*



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BUSINESS

Recycled Building

The Gas Co. is using a wide array of recycled materials for its Energy Resource Center in Downey, due to be completed early next year. An existing office complex is being dismantled piece by piece, and 60% to 70% of the old building will be incorporated into the new structure. A look at how the company is using recycled or reused materials:

A The Wall
Part of a retired World War II Navy attack submarine will be pulled down and used to make part of the building's steel frame. In addition, wreckage confiscated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department have been melted down and will be used to make reinforcing bars. Recycled newspapers will make up the wall paneling, and the panels will be covered with sand, a fabric made from recycled tropical plastic.

B The Entry Walkway
Scraps of orange polystyrene pipe that was used to transport natural gas underground will be chipped up and thrown into the concrete mix to add color. Bits of metal from the original building's facade will also be used in the walkway.

C The Parking Lot
Rubber automobile tires will be boiled and used as a slurry coat to resurface the parking lot. The rubber is expected to produce greater wear and skid resistance and reduce noise.

D The Reception Area
The floor will be made of Douglas fir beams and posts from the old Bureau Republic warehouse in San Francisco, which was built in the 1890s and dismantled after the Loma Prieta earthquake. An arched wall will be made entirely of recycled structural aluminum. The counter-top of the reception desk will be made of recycled tempered glass.

The Beauty of Natural Energy

In developing L.A. Casa we started with the premise that ideally creating a home should be self-sufficient. So we searched for ways in which a comfortable living space could be created naturally. This is why all design solutions in L.A. Casa incorporate an analysis of natural elements including the use of air-flow, natural lighting and shading, solar heating and passive ventilation.

In addition, all materials and energy put into L.A. Casa were evaluated in terms of their impact on the environment. This is why natural gas was the natural choice for bringing added warmth and comfort to L.A. Casa. The combined result of this approach is a model for homes that function cleaner, work more efficiently, and help preserve Earth's natural beauty.

The way a house is shaped and configured affects how much energy is used, and how functional it is to the people living within. L.A. Casa is more energy efficient than most because of its non-traditional design which gives it the "living room" and space of a bigger house, but with minimum enclosed square footage. This feat was accomplished by breaking down the traditional "rooms" of rooms. Some of L.A. Casa's walls were constructed in a way that allows them to slide into walls when not in use. This means L.A. Casa has the flexibility to have many rooms or just one big room. Furthermore, in keeping with the southern California lifestyle, L.A. Casa has large terraces which extend indoor areas into the outdoor space. So on nice days you can open all the doors and feel like you're living, dining and even sleeping in the great outdoors.

The Shape of Things to Come

Another revolutionary feature of L.A. Casa is the "Utility Wall." This wall is the command center for all the home's utility systems. The Utility Wall makes the building of L.A. Casa more efficient, as all cables, wires and plumbing are pulled through this central wall. The Utility Wall also organizes the "rooms" of the house, making integration with all future technology systems a simpler process.

The Gas Company Energy Resource Center Downey, California

Sparking Ideas to Fuel California's Future

In 1993 - 1994, The Acorn Group created the interpretive master plan for The Gas Company's new Energy Resource Center. The Center features a 40,000 square foot exhibit hall showcasing natural gas and fuel cell technologies, new residential and commercial equipment, the process of combustion, climate control options, and approaches to managing air quality.

The Acorn Group also developed all interpretive panel text for the Center's exhibits and brochure material for the L.A. Casa traveling architectural exhibit.