

Global Holcim Awards Jury Meeting 2009

Project appraisal

Global Holcim Awards Bronze 2009

Sustainable planning for a rural community, Beijing, China

This project, upgrading a rural area new Beijing, intelligently addresses three critical national priorities for sustainable development policy in China - first the more efficient use of precious land by gradually lifting quality of life and living density, second improving the living conditions for rural families as a harmonious and balanced response to urban development, and third reducing the ecological footprint by improved resource management and use of renewable energy sources.

An outstanding element of the approach is the deep analysis of the existing physical and cultural situation of the existing community including numbers of people, density of buildings and the quality of the existing biodiversity. Field surveys and door to door interviews were carried out.

A step by step approach is then devised for renewal of houses and circulation spaces to include energy and water efficiency, improved infrastructure for managing human waste, water and rubbish. Care is taken to incorporate improved public spaces for the community as the density of housing is increased. Renovation and reuse of materials is considered alongside new construction using local materials.

There is strong public participation in planning and decision making with no forced eviction from homes. The approach is able to accommodate changes to the status of land rights.

Care is taken to keep costs within affordable limits. The judges believe that further economic benefits could come from using recycled waste water for farm irrigation by fully recycling nutrients from the waste stream into the local food production and using secondary biomass for energy production.