

Stamp of approval



We are oh-so proud of filing-system developer Orgafile, the first South African company to be honoured with the coveted Red Dot Award for product design. Orgafile was selected from over 4 252 submissions by the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen in Germany, one of the oldest and most highly reputed design institutions in the world. The Orgafile design is modular, allowing it to grow as storage needs change. Designed by father-and-son team Arnold and Adrian van Wijk, Orgafile is easy to move because it consists of a system of drawers instead of cumbersome cabinets. • www.orgafile.com

Andy Horn

PHOTO GREG COX WORDS ALMA VIVIERS

Sustainability is no longer enough, according to green architect Andy Horn. Now we must look at more regenerative ways of building and living.

WHAT IS GREEN ARCHITECTURE?

It is not a style, trend or a vernacular, nor is it new. It is a climatically, geographically and culturally appropriate way of building.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BE A GREEN ARCHITECT?

I grew up in Swaziland where it struck me that modern buildings clashed with the landscape while the rural, vernacular buildings of mud-brick walls and thatch seemed to belong. As a student I became interested in environmental issues and how they related to social and political issues. I realised architecture had to be responsive on all levels.

YOU BELIEVE BUILDINGS MUST FORM PART OF REGENERATIVE SYSTEMS. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

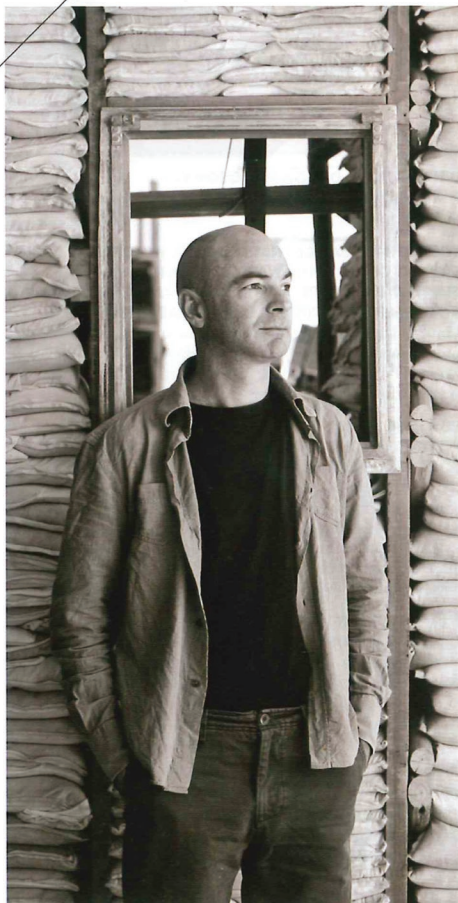
It begins at a regional or urban-planning level, where services such as sewage, water and the nutrient cycle can be linked into a new development to create a living ecology. The ideal is to have a self-sufficient settlement where these cycles are closed rather than externalised. Buildings can also act as healing "cells". For example, if rainwater can be filtered through a planted roof, the water that eventually leaves that building will be in a better condition. This, combined with green corridors for wildlife to inhabit, will move us towards integrated living systems.

IS IT THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT TO FACILITATE THINKING AROUND GREENER LIVING?

Yes, people go to architects for ideas and it is through design that we solve problems, creating new processes and opportunities. Real magic happens when there is synergy between different design components but we (architects, engineers and so on) have become so specialised and isolated that we tend to forget this.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ALL HOMEOWNERS, CLIENTS AND ARCHITECTS TO CONSIDER?

Apart from factors such as socio-economic and cultural upliftment, respect for the environment and its resources, and using healthy materials, it is always more environmentally friendly to save energy than to produce it. Optimise your energy use through passive heating and cooling as well as maximising natural light. Use physics and the laws of nature. In the end it is the subtle things that make your building green, not the eco-gadgets.



• Eco Design Architects and Consultants 021 462 1614, www.ecodesignarchitects.co.za (download Andy Horn's Manifesto for Green Architecture)