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Environmental Communities

The Sydney 2000 Olympic Village

Newington, the home of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Village, is located in next to Homebush Bay, 14.5 kilometers west of downtown Sydney, New South Wales (NSW). The site was an abandoned munitions depot that was restored to native savanna. Three neighborhoods were constructed, each within a five-minute walk to a village green and a 27,881-square-meter commercial center. The village housed 15,000 athletes and coaches during the Olympics; afterwards the village's houses were sold. The project has proven to be immensely popular. Houses originally priced at US\$180,000 are now selling for more than double that. Great care went into energy-efficient design and the choice of building materials. Many of the homes have roof-integrated photovoltaic systems — financed by the NSW Sustainable Energy Development Authority — each generating 1 kilowatt of electricity. Overall, this is one of the largest building-integrated PV systems in the world, and it is being used to understand how a grid behaves with distributed electrical generation.

Village Homes, Davis, California

Village Homes in Davis, California is a green, planned residential community of single-family detached homes and apartments built in 1981. The 70-acre development also includes 12 acres of greenbelts and open space, 12 acres of common agricultural land, and 4,000 square feet of commercial office space. Designed to take maximum advantage of the sun, the annual household bills are one-half to one-third lower than in surrounding neighborhoods. Natural drainage systems on site saved \$800 per lot and proved more effective for handling stormwater. Narrow streets reduced the amount of pavement needed, lowered ambient air temperature by 15 degrees, increased pedestrian safety, and allowed for future reductions in the cost of repair and maintenance. Edible landscape, pedestrian walking paths, and bike trails have also proved popular with residents. The original investors of Village Homes have made a profit of 30 percent per year. In 1995, homes sold for \$10–\$25 per square foot higher than the market rate. They continually have a low turnover rate and sell faster than is typical for the region.

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