

# Wisconsin Green Building Project Profile

## Holy Wisdom Monastery

4200 County Road M  
Middleton, WI 53562

### BACKGROUND

Committed to *weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life as an ecumenical Benedictine community*, the Benedictine Women of Madison spent ten years restoring 95 of their 130 acres from farmland to prairie. They also dredged and restored their glacial lake to its original size. Continuing their commitment to 'care for the earth', the Sisters concluded that they needed to replace Benedict House, their obsolete, five-story, 60,000 square foot retreat and conference center which never effectively served their mission and was extremely costly to operate and maintain. They determined that Benedict House should be replaced with a smaller building that would a) support their mission, b) be designed and built sustainably within a fiscally responsible budget, and c) achieve a LEED® Platinum rating.

### RESULTS

The new Holy Wisdom Monastery provides the Sisters and others with spaces for worship, retreats, concerts, conferences, lectures, interfaith dialogue, dining, reading, and administration. Completed in August of 2009 at an impressive total project cost of \$246/sf, the two-story, 34,300 square foot *Holy Wisdom Monastery received 63 out of a possible 69 points under LEED-NC v2.2—making it the highest-rated LEED-NC building in the United States to date.*

Energy consumption is anticipated to be reduced by 60% and water usage by over 40% compared to a LEED baseline building. The photovoltaic system provides 13% of the total energy requirements and is designed to be expanded to eventually provide 100% of the monastery's energy

needs on a net basis from on-site, renewable sources. The geothermal system consists of 39 wells, each 300' deep, located beneath the parking area.

Large, carefully placed windows bathe 85% of occupied spaces with natural light, including the entire Assembly Room (Chapel). The high-performance glass of the Andersen® wood windows minimizes heat losses/gains combined with the visible transmittance of 20% specified for all but the northern exposures eliminated the need for blinds. This provides spectacular views of the prairie and Lake Mendota with the city of Madison in the distance. Bamboo was used for the floors of the monastery's main spaces and the ceilings of the Oratory and Meditation Chapel.

Pervious concrete in low parking lot spots captures runoff and two drought-resistant vegetated roofs, four rain barrels, and two rain gardens reduce storm water run-off to 13% below pre-development levels. Prior to beginning work on Holy Wisdom Monastery, Hoffman LLC responsibly deconstructed Benedict House, diverting 99.75% of the material from landfills through salvage, reuse, and recycling.

### PROJECT INFORMATION

- Date of Completion: August 2009  
Architect: Hoffman LLC  
Owner: Benedictine Women of Madison  
Construction Manager: Hoffman LLC  
Consultants:
- Energy: CDH Energy Corporation
  - Structural: Larson Engineering
  - Electrical: Czarnecki Engineering
  - Mechanical: Frederickson Engineering
  - Plumbing/Fire Protection: LGD
  - Acoustical: Yerges Acoustics
  - Geothermal: Sustainable Engineering Group
  - LEED Certification: Vertegy

## Green Building Awards

- 2010 LEED® Platinum certified (New Construction)
- 2009 Aon Build America Merit Award – The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America
- 2009 Top Project – *Wisconsin Builder* magazine



For more information about the building please check out the monastery's website at: [www.benedictinewomen.org](http://www.benedictinewomen.org) or Hoffman LLC's website at: [www.hoffman.net](http://www.hoffman.net)