

Energy Retrofitting Older Homes

This playbook outlines the steps required to update older homes to be more energy-efficient. It focuses on the preservation of the home's original character throughout the retrofitting process.

Step 1: **Audit**

Conduct an energy audit to assess the current energy consumption and identify where the home is losing energy. This will help guide the entire retrofitting process.

Step 2: **Plan**

Develop a retrofitting plan that prioritizes interventions based on the energy audit. Ensure that the renovations respect and maintain the character of the home.

Step 3: **Insulate**

Upgrade insulation in key areas such as the attic, walls, and floors to reduce heat loss. Select materials and methods that are in keeping with the historical nature of the home.

Step 4: **Seal**

Seal gaps and cracks around windows, doors, and other openings to prevent drafts. Care should be taken to use methods and materials that can be removed or reversed without damage to historical elements.

Step 5: **Windows**

Improve window efficiency by using storm windows, window films, or replacement with energy-efficient models that replicate the historical design.

Step 6: **Systems**

Update the home's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to more energy-efficient units. Ensure new installations do not compromise the architectural integrity of the home.

Step 7: **Lighting**

Replace incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LED or CFL bulbs. Select fixtures that complement the home's historical character.

Step 8: **Water**

Install water-saving devices like low-flow faucets, toilets, and showerheads. These changes should be done in a way that does not alter the home's aesthetic.

Step 9: **Renewables**

Consider the addition of renewable energy sources such as solar panels or a geothermal system, designed to minimize visual impact on the home's exterior.

Step 10: **Monitor**

After improvements are made, continually monitor the home's energy consumption to track the effectiveness of the retrofit and make adjustments as necessary.

General Notes

Permits

Before starting work, ensure that all necessary building permits are obtained, especially considering the historical nature of the property.

Historical Integrity

At all stages, ensure that retrofits are sympathetic to the historical and architectural significance of the home. Consult with historical preservation specialists as needed.

Incentives

Research local, state, and federal incentives for energy retrofits in historic homes, which can help offset some of the costs.

Professional Help

Consider hiring professionals with experience in retrofitting older homes to ensure that the updates are efficient and preserve the home's character.