Uncommon Ground Sustainable Residence Design
Engineering Science Capstone Design Project

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Abstract
The owner of a local restaurant envisions a modern, sustainable, and cost-effective residential addition above his business. The goal of this project is to design the most energy efficient and sustainable dwelling unit possible with the highest return on investment. In order to accomplish this, the team designed multiple subsystems for the unit, including its structure, solar energy, water, stormwater management, ventilation, and thermal regulation. Various design strategies were implemented to reach a holistic design of all required systems. A risk analysis was conducted in order to iterate the design and provide risk mitigation recommendations. Calculations along with modeling tested the final design to ensure its functionality. This testing resulted in outputs that confirmed the design's structural integrity, energy-efficiency, comfort, sustainability, and financial feasibility.

Introduction

Background
Uncommon Ground is a farm-to-table, organic restaurant that has won many sustainability awards, with locations in Rogers Park and Lakeview, Chicago. The Rogers Park location established itself as the first certified organic rooftop farm in the United States. Community and environmental sustainability are the two core values that the owners, Michael and Helen Cameron, have incorporated into Uncommon Ground by using reclaimed wood, solar panel, and farm-grown, local food. On the roof of the Rogers Park restaurant, Michael Cameron envisions a modern dwelling unit to be built on the southeast corner of the building.

Requirements
The design will accommodate up to 4 people, including a bedroom sized for a queen-sized bed, kitchenette, a sitting area with a sleeper sofa, single bathroom, and patio area overlooking the rooftop garden. The unit will be aesthetically pleasing and stand-out from the rest of the building. All relevant codes and regulations were considered throughout the design process to ensure that the final design will be in compliance when implemented. The design aims to align as closely as possible with LEED building standards.

System Description
The system boundary encapsulates the dwelling unit addition, its relationship with the Uncommon Ground restaurant’s main structure, and the surrounding environmental factors such as sun, wind, and rain. Subsystems integrate with the holistic design of the dwelling unit and are represented in the system diagram. Each box in the diagram describes a subsystem or process. Inputs and outputs are described with headed arrows.

Methods

Passive Design
The goal of passive design is to design a building to heat and cool naturally. It is best to reduce a building’s energy consumption. The residential unit was designed for the sun’s altitude angles at 2401 W Davon to shade the summer sun for cooling and capture winter sun to warm the space. A long, south-facing façade filled with windows is incorporated in our design because the sun faces that way. The unit has a long, east to west direction to absorb the most solar energy. Different shading devices and overhangs will be incorporated depending on the cardinal direction of the exterior and the kind of daylighting desired.

Thermal Regulation
Passive design strategies are utilized as much as possible to heat and cool the unit in the most energy-efficient manner. In order to ensure occupant comfort, a mechanical heating and cooling system such as a ductless mini-split or split air source heat pump was considered in the design. Calculations were done to assess the solar heat gain and heat transfer of material components of the house (roof, windows, exterior walls, etc.) and the subsequent heating and cooling loads imposed on the unit’s mechanical thermal regulation system.

Structural Analysis
For the structural analysis of the design, we used the Load and Resistance Factor Design (LRFD) equations built into the Autodesk Robot structural analysis software and consistent with ASCE standards. We used LRFD alternative Allowable Strength Design (ASD) because the latter only account for allowable strength and don’t take into consideration overdesign, whereas the LRFD allows us to use more efficient members that are still strong enough. First, we determined where columns could be placed in our design with respect to the existing UG structure. This was done with the help of Dr. Moskivi, a structural engineering professor at IIT. Then, we took the building geometry we had created, sketched it, and created a 3D model in Robot. Afterwards, we ran calculations with the software and made minor adjustments to make sure the model was an accurate representation of our design. Then, we used the software’s in-built ANSI/ASCE code verification tool to verify that our structural members held up to the LRFD standards. The software also notified us of whether we had under-designed or over-designed, and offered an optional member to use.

Models

IES-VE
Integrated Environmental Solutions Virtual Environment (IESVE) software that is capable of accurate energy modeling and thermal load analysis. The program allows the user to select constructions, materials, and time frames for simulations. We used IESVE to model our system with appropriate passive design strategies and to validate our design.

Results

Structural Integrity
The stress maps for the structure show where the most force would be experienced in each member. The members we used were W8×36 for columns, HRF3 for beams, USK600 for Bracings, and HSR65×6x1 for the roof bracings. Our robot tools showed that our model followed the US Leasing Standards (USA) for AL2000-SC, and that all the members were optimized for weight.

Sustainability
One of our design goals is to align with as many LEED Platinum criteria as possible to ensure our design is energy efficient and has a low environmental impact. Our focus was on the categories of Location & Transport, Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality.

Financial Feasibility
For our revenue calculations, we assumed the average visitor would be a 4 person family. We created 3 revenue scenarios based on Airbnb’s data, before taxes:

High: $200/night at 75% occupancy with a 3% Airbnb service fee – $15,315/year
Medium: $122/night at 52% occupancy with a 3% Airbnb service fee – $12,460/year
Low: $66/night at 40% occupancy with a 3% Airbnb service fee – $11,390/year

We estimated the cost of our building to be around $35,000 and average maintenance costs to be $4,800. Using these as a baseline, we calculated the ROI for three revenue scenarios. At high revenue, ROI would be 194% with a payback period of 2 years and 5 months. At medium revenue, ROI was 80%, with a payback period of 6 years and 3 months. At low revenue, ROI was 39% with a payback period of 15 years.

Comfort & Energy Efficiency
Using the energy and thermal analysis software IESVE, we were able to model out structure with all construction materials and see how it behaves in real world weather conditions.

Discussion

The testing implemented was able to demonstrate the design’s functionality. The designed unit is able to perform as intended for each requirement that was specified. The proposed design is a structurally sound residential addition that ties in effectively with the main restaurant’s structure. Since structural simulations were run solely for the platform and frame, more study members may have to be substituted in order for arches to withstand the weight of furnishings, sheathing, roofs, and solar panels. The emphasis of the modeling was to show the feasibility of the design rather than to provide a final and accurate design. The steel and structural design must be completed by a licensed structural engineer and approved, as this is beyond the scope of this project. With the modeling, we’ve done in IESVE, we’re able to see how effective our passive design strategies are in order to regulate the temperature and air quality of the unit. The focus of this modeling was to detail the validity of our design decisions and how they react to real world conditions. We expect medium and high revenue streams to be probable for this residential addition. As shown by the calculations, the medium and high revenues will result in profit for Uncommon Ground or at least in a break-even scenario. Therefore, we can say that it is likely that the unit can fully payback its initial investment within a period of 5 years after construction. So far, the project’s goal to align with LEED Platinum criteria by being energy efficient and sustainable is feasible. Next steps to be taken could include further analyzing details of each of the individual systems and comparing them to the LEED baselines.

Acknowledgements

Michael Cameron, Business Owner
Dr. Gajan Sivandran, Assistant Professor
Dr. Nate Sivandran, Director of Engineering Science
Dr. Parham Shahrabi, Mechanical Engineer
Dr. Cameron Rogers, Professor of Engineering Science
Kenneth A. Borup, Mechanical Engineer
Ezra R. K. Zafar, Structural Engineer
Kristen J. H. Wazny, Environmental Engineer
Igor Sanyos, Energy Advisor and Engineer
S. Lamiri, Structural Engineer
Shahriar Sheibani, Structural Engineer
AL-Badi, Structural Engineer
Alvin Katrina, Structural Engineer
Dr. Sivandran, Mechanical Engineer
Krista Wilcox, Architect
Shaun O’Shea, Building Performance Engineer
Maria Selvina, Environmental Engineer