

## **Green Home of the Year Submittal Guide**

(Revised August 2025)

Here are a few tips to help you portray your entry in the best light possible, regardless of category:

### **Do's**

- While we have a word limit, 400 words can be “not enough” depending on your writing style. For others, it can be way too much space. Make every word count. Highlight all the features that stand out, but be succinct. Remember: You’re submitting an entry for a print/digital magazine. Words are important.
- Submit meaningful pictures. Think of them as visual aids. If they don’t provide much aid, that’s not going to help your cause.
- Consider submitting a floor plan and/or site plan, especially if it ties in with your narrative.
- If you are extolling a solar/PV system, make sure your site plan has a compass rose.
- Take into consideration necessary context for your project’s write-up, such as information about the site, neighborhood, community or climate.
- Include your project’s accomplishments (if applicable). Judges tend to like projects that deliver on their claims just as much and sometimes more so than those that are designed to accomplish greatness.

### **Do Not's**

- Submit pictures that don’t relate to your write-up. Otherwise, both aspects of your entry lack context.
- Submit projects that fall outside of the following timeframe: Grand opening or first occupancy between November 2024 and October 2025
- Devote 400 words to one aspect of the project. The judges want to see a well-rounded project that covers as many facets of sustainability as possible.
- Forget to be persuasive. The judges are not going to be able to visit your project, so you have to bring it to them via your images and words.
- Even though we ask for low-res images in the submittal process, do not submit grainy pictures or plans.
- Copy and paste your entry from another award contest if your write-up is narrowly focused to the other contest’s criteria. Judges tend to give fewer points to a one-trick pony.

## What are the GHOTY judges looking for?

Each category has its nuances, but in general, here is what the judges are basing their decisions on:

- The overall design of the project. Remember: sustainability is the benchmark
- The depth of building science employed in the project
- The project's fit into the environment (such as exterior material choices, building style, landscaping)
- The project's thoughtful approach to resources (material reuse, efficient design, local sourcing, embodied energy)
- Resilience
- Affordability
- The project's siting and location planning in relation to orientation and shading
- The project's fit into the existing community or neighborhood
- The project's appeal to homebuyers/homeowners or building professionals

## Alternative Building

- The project's use of alternative building strategies (i.e. SIPs, ICFs, etc.) to achieve its sustainability goals

## Mainstream Green

- The project's ability to help mainstream the concept of a sustainable home
- Note: a verified HERS rating of 50 or better is required

## Off-site

- The quality and performance of components built at a remote location (prefab, modular, etc.)
- Why you utilized off-site construction as well as any lessons learned

## Small Footprint Living

- The project's ability to make the most of limited square footage (< 800 s.f. conditioned space)

## Sustainable Community

- The community's planning and execution to create a livable, low-impact place

## Above and Beyond: Drought Ready

- The use or re-use of onsite water

## Above and Beyond: Flood Ready

- The various mitigation techniques to reduce not only the risk from water damage and flooding, but also the ability to recover following a flooding incident

## Above and Beyond: Wildfire Ready

- How to resist all but the worst wildfire situations, from site preparation to product selection

## Above and Beyond: Net Zero *Plus* Energy

- How the project applies solar or wind energy systems to provide enough renewable energy to exceed 100% of likely annual energy demands

### Above and Beyond: Extreme Heat Ready

- The necessary building science, optimal insulation, massing, windows and other features to reduce the impacts of extreme temperatures outdoors, which includes reduced cooling costs

### **Should you win, you'll want to make sure:**

- You have high-res copies of the low-res images you submitted.
- You or a representative are available for Green Builder® Media to contact (post-deadline) if they need additional content/quotes.

Good luck!!