



Green *spiration*

by Suzy Dubel

How to have your house and GREEN it too.

Can a “soccer mom” successfully navigate the complexities of building a custom home while staying true to her goal of a green--yet traditional looking--home?

Lifelong Guilford county resident, Trish Holder, is about to find out. Trish and her husband, Mark Raines, have recently broke ground on a new home in Northwest Guilford County in the Pleasant Oaks subdivision. The Holder-Raines family’s “Greenspiration Home” will incorporate many high performance and environmentally responsible features. At the same time, its French Country facade will blend seamlessly into this very traditional suburban neighborhood. Trish is also offering the home up as an educational resource for homeowners, contractors, and builders who want to learn more about building green. There’s a website (www.greenspirationhome.com) and there will be numerous events and open houses both during construction and after completion.

How did you come up with the idea to do a green house?

The idea really “evolved” into what it is today. I’m a writer for the Heating Ventilating and Air Conditioning industry, so at first I just thought I would incorporate some high efficiency heating and cooling equipment. But then, I kept thinking, why stop there? Pretty soon I was on my way toward “greening” the entire home.

How much more expensive is it build a green house?

That’s sort of like asking, “How much more expensive is it to build a ‘pretty’ house?” Right now, “green” is in the eye of the beholder. Some people might equate Energy Star appliances and bamboo countertops with “green.” If that’s all it means to you, then the cost is negligible. I’m going “ground-up” green, and I’m prepared to build a home that cost 10 – maybe even 15%--more to build, but less to operate. For instance, my HVAC system may cost 3 times as much as a standard system but will starting paying me back immediately because it will not require any fossil fuel to operate.

Are all of the products locally found?

I’m trying to source as many local materials as possible. I prefer not to rely on materials that are brought from overseas; I’d rather support local industries and avoid the emissions associated with shipping. I’ve found local resources for framing and interior wood, brick, windows, exterior pavers, roofing, countertops, and more.



Will the outside grounds contain recycled materials?

Yes. There’s a paver product called EarthStone that is made right here in Greensboro from 100% scrap granite that would otherwise go to a landfill. We’re also using Amarr garage doors that are made from recycled window materials.

Are there any other homes of this type in Guilford County at this time?

There are some builders that specialize in high efficiency homes, but I’m not aware of any home exactly like this because we’ve got some unique goals—including pursuing certification from the NAHB (National Association of Home Builders) Green Building Standard; and we may pursue a more challenging standard from the USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council), known as LEED or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Basically, we’re trying to be green whenever and wherever it doesn’t undermine the appearance or budget of the home.

Who is the builder and what type of background do they have using the different materials needed for this type of project.

I picked Don & Megan Cohan of Signature Homes because I knew they built quality custom homes and because I liked them so much—not because of their green building experience. However, because of this project, they’ve both taken green building courses over the last several months, and have taken leadership roles in the Greensboro Homebuilders Association’s green building initiative. Don just completed his first Energy Star spec home which was one of just a few Energy Star homes on the entire Spring Parade of Homes. So, even though they weren’t a “green builder” before they got involved in Greenspiration, they are now.

What is the time frame for completion?

Mid-October. That’s when we plan to host several open houses so the public can tour the home.

Give a few specifics of materials being used.

In terms of systems and construction, we’ll be using NC wood framing materials, a WaterFurnace® geothermal heat pump, Corbond® sprayed foam insulation, Pine Hall Brick, and a Broan-NuTone® home ventilation system. On the inside, we’ll us recycled countertop materials from shetkaSTONE and Enviroglas®, Virginia-mined granite, and NC grown hardwood cabinets made by Blackstone Cabinetry in Burlington, NC hardwood flooring, Kohler® dual flush toilets & low flow water fixtures, Solutube® solar tube lighting. We’ll even have an electric fireplace! ■