

Green Scene

Where housing and the environment connect



This custom spec home sets out to prove that luxury can be green and beautiful. The project will be evaluated against four rating systems.

“The irresistible opportunity for us to use a project of such extreme high quality in such an exclusive market resides in the fact that people everywhere are genuinely interested in spectacular projects and famous locations,” Jones continues. “But the glamour of the project is not what appeals most to us. The fact that we will be able to garner real-life performance data that reflects the results of employing state-of-the-art products, systems, and technologies is made even more intriguing since we will also evaluate the project against four rating systems for side-by-side comparison.”

The team is going for LEED Gold but will meet Silver as a minimum. The house is also trying to meet the rigorous Pitkin County regulations for energy efficiency, air quality, and safety. For comparison purposes, we will also score the project according to the NAHB National Green Building Program, and the state HBA’s regional program, Built Green Colorado.

To some, building a big home is the antithesis of green, and our goal at *Green Builder* is to encourage smaller footprints. But larger homes will continue to be built, and the objective here is to illustrate how to do it right.

“Homes of this nature will continue to be built,” emphasizes Hazelbaker. “It could be that big homes will be trending smaller. But, interestingly, our home is on the smaller size of the grand homes that have been built here over the years—many reaching 25,000 square feet and up. We want to be a model for sustainable approach.”

Energy sources for the home include geothermal with ground source heat

Mountain Masterpiece

Green Builder’s latest VISION House Series project gets under way in Aspen, Colo.

The Green Builder Media team is proud to announce the beginning stages of what is shaping up to be our most ambitious show home ever. Over the past few years we have built a market-rate home on an infill lot, a house that left the waterway it was built alongside in better shape than before it started, and a project that illustrated the benefits of ICFs.

Now, we are taking a luxury project and showing how a high-end home can be built super green and live harmoniously with both the environment and its neighbors.

The house, which is built in “contemporary mountain mining” style, was designed by Stace McGee, founder and president of EDI, and Kenny Myers, also of EDI, and is being developed and built by Gerry Hazelbaker, president of Paradigm Construction Corp. Joining them is a host of manufacturers and other sponsors committed to creating an innovative green luxury home.

“I see this as a challenge to create a sustainable home with the level of features and finishes demanded by high-end buyers,” says Hazelbaker. The two-level spec home is roughly 6,700 square feet with five bedrooms, five and a half baths, and a three-car garage. It sits just down slope from Starwood on McClane Flats outside Aspen, with views of four ski areas and the continental divide.

“The VISION House Aspen project is unique in several ways. Balancing our commitment to sustainable building with the consumer demands in a market like Aspen presents an interesting philosophical challenge,” explains Ron Jones, co-founder of Green Builder Media.

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Part of our VISION House Series, this energy-efficient luxury home pushes the envelope for performance and high design. The house will be completed this fall.

pumps, solar thermal, solar PV, and a backup gas-fired boiler. These supply radiant floor heat, fan coil units for supplemental forced air heating, warm season air-conditioning, humidification, air filtration, domestic hot water heating, and snow melt systems.

The systems are tied together with an advanced system of controls, which allows the most efficient use of energy. A whole-house control panel provides easy user interface and can be accessed via the Internet.

This brainy, high-performance core is wrapped in a stunning exterior. "It was one of the hardest designs we ever did," admits architect McGee. "It's a rough site—brutal—because [the county] design codes limit you from building a home that sits tall."

But the site is what most excites McGee. "We have fantastic views of ski peaks like Aspen Mountain, Aspen Highlands, and Snowmass. We've got great floor-to-ceiling windows, which push the outdoors into the house." McGee describes an open floor plan that uses varied ceiling heights and partial walls to define space. "We are believers that you want big spaces to entertain in as well as places for cozy and quiet."

While the build continues, the team continues to vet new products and refine the design and systems, which you'll read about here and in our ongoing coverage of the house on our website www.greenbuildermag.com. Final coverage of the project is slated for IBS 2010.

"I am—and I know everyone else involved is—excited about being a part of this project," says Hazelbaker. "We hope that the process will be an education for us and for others who are interested to come visit, look, and listen. And certainly for the buyer, whom we assume will be attracted to this home because of all the steps we've taken—and will yet take—to create this "vision."

Green Home* Market Estimate:



Navigating Green

The latest research reveals a promising outlook for residential green builders

Green builders are on an uncharted course as they take the helm of home building through a sea of economic turmoil. Helping to guide them is a recent report published by McGraw Hill Construction and NAHB, "The Green Home Builder: Navigating for Success in a Down Economy," which revisits the first survey conducted in 2006 and sheds light on green building practices that are surging ahead despite a down market.

According to the report, builders believe green is a market differentiator—40% find "building green" makes it easier to market in a down economy, with 16% finding it makes it much easier. "Green building has definitely reached its upper tipping point," says Harvey M. Bernstein, McGraw-Hill Construction vice president of industry analytics, alliances, and strategic initiatives.

"Builders can no longer ignore the benefits and market advantages of green building," he says.

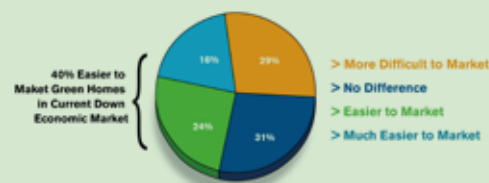
The report also found that 85% of builders surveyed think that energy-efficient features are the ones making these homes more environmentally friendly. Builders use products that lead to energy efficiency; they focus on air sealing/tight construction, increased insulation,

water-efficient plumbing fixtures, and Energy Star products.

There has been a shift in reasons for building green as well. In 2006, "doing the right thing" was the top driver for building green. Now, "quality" is the top driver, which seems to indicate that green home buyers in today's market are also buying a green home for investment and performance reasons.

Although builders may be at different stages of incorporating green building practices, respondents were asked to consider a green home as one that contained numerous

Ease/Difficulty of Marketing Green in Current Down Market



sustainable features and adhered to a national or local green building program.

According to the report, "A majority of building industry leaders are saying that if a builder is not building green in the near future, it will not be building at all." It also projects that in 2009, 21% of builders expect to be building 90% of projects green.

Interesting to note, is the region in the United States with the best growth in green building is the Pacific, followed by the South Atlantic and Mountain regions. The East South Central region has the lowest growth. —T. Fox