

**OPENED
JUNE 10th,**
VISION House®
Los Angeles is
the latest in the
VISION House®
Series

“Whole-Lot Living”

**VISION House®
Los Angeles** shows
how a narrow infill
lot can be
transformed into a
green-living
sanctuary, all using
tools and products
that are readily
available to builders
and architects.

BY CHRISTINA BIRCHFIELD
PHOTOGRAPHY: LATHAMARCHITECTURAL.COM
(unless otherwise noted)

Look to the West

Most green homes try to face south or north, depending on whether they want to flaunt their green creds. But infill often means compromise. VISION House® LA faces west, yet still achieves passive living and solar goals. The west-facing garage shields the home from afternoon sun, and awnings over the west window above the garage shield it as well. The window also allows for cross-ventilation to the bedroom. A sunset deck screens an adjacent bedroom and shades the home office. The permeable driveway mitigates run off.



Resting Place

Accordion walls on the home's east side not only open indoor space to the 250-sq.-ft. covered loggia. Indoor and outdoor spaces share the same plank ceiling—connecting the inner and outer world. The loggia features its own FMI Portofino fireplace, as well as patio heaters, so the space can serve as an extension of the home's pavilion effect—or as a separate, more intimate space for morning coffee or evening wine. Always present are the soothing sounds of the nearby fountain.



Roofscapes

VISION House® features a Custom-Bilt, long-lasting metal roof—the *Titan Cool Roof*—which reflects 70% of the sun's energy. A 7.22-kW SunRun/Leviton PV array is expected to provide more than 30% of the home's electric needs. The system consists of 39 Suntech Power System PV panels with a KACO inverter. Calculations estimate that the panels will produce 10,273 KWh of solar energy, which may offset 93% of the home's energy usage. The Bright Green roof is planted with succulents that provides a garden view from the master suite.



Street Smarts

Gardens surround the home's periphery, and the front is no exception. Pacific Palisades is a walking neighborhood. The front garden and its scavenged iron-beam fountain provide sound and scent and view from the home office. This is a communal place to hang out, chat with neighbors, and maybe share an evening glass of wine.



Project Team

Builder:
Structure Home
Woodland Hills, CA
www.structurehome.com

Architects:
P2 Design
Newport Beach, CA
www.p2designinc.com

KAA Design Group
Los Angeles, CA
www.kaadesigngroup.com

Landscape Designer:
MJN Design Studio
Westlake Village, CA
www.mjndesignstudio.com

Interior Designer:
Jill Wolff Interior Design
Calabasas, CA
www.jillwolffdesign.com





Local Comfort

Many of the couches, tables and other furnishings seen in VHLA were made within a stone's throw, at a factory owned by Cisco Brothers (www.ciscobrothers.com). The company makes an active effort to produce American-made goods in a sustainable, low-impact way.

INSPIRED CONTEMPORARY

KAA Design director of architecture Patti Baker describes the home's style as warm California contemporary. KAA collaborated with Karen Putman of P2 on the project design. The California contemporary look both respects and takes inspiration from the historical references of 15th-century Spanish Mission architecture, and combines those references with the clean contemporary forms of wood and large expanses of glass. The result is a high-performance, inviting, green home—a sanctuary that one might not ever want to leave.

From the curb, there are only hints at what is within. The lot faces west; the garage faces the street, protecting much of the house from afternoon sun. The driveway is permeable. The home office/guest suite is to the right of the garage. Above it is a screened and trellised second-floor deck. This southwest deck shields one of the bedrooms, and also provides the perfect spot to enjoy sunset views.

An entry patio garden on the right side provides the home office with an inviting garden view. Gardens line the entire home periphery. The front garden, with its built-in seating, gives the family a place to hang out and banter with neighbors walking to shops and restaurants along nearby Sunset Boulevard. Ditching the car and strolling are integral to the neighborhood experience, architectural designer Karen Putman says.

Entry to the home is by way of a peaceful, meandering garden path along the home's south side. Landscaping surrounds the home and blurs the boundaries between indoors and out. The garden path leads to the sheltered front door about a third of the way down the south façade.

Once inside the entry foyer, one has choices: to the left is the home office/guest suite, straight ahead along the north wall are stairs leading to the second floor, and to the right is the formal dining area that leads to the open public areas to the house—the kitchen and main living area. A change in ceiling height defines this open living space into "rooms." A white ceiling defines the formal dining area. Plank ceilings demarcate the informal

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Behind the Walls

One of the problems in defining green is that much of what makes a home a resource and power-conserving wonder is hidden—no one can see it. And that is true of VISION House® Los Angeles.

Framing: The walls are 2" x 6" studs, 24" on center. Much of the wood is forest-preserving, engineered wood, such as the Boise Cascade engineered-wood floor joists.



Windows: These include dual-glazed, low-E, Max Plus (Solarban 60) with a U-value of .26-.29 from JELD-WEN and Western Windows.

Insulation: Spray polyurethane foam insulation (Johns Manville's Corbond MCS) in the roof brings its R-value to 30. Johns Manville blown-in Spider insulation makes for an R-19 wall. And that insulation is tight—with no gaps.

Ductwork: The R-8 ductwork is all kept within the conditioned space; it's antimicrobial, too.

Air Filtration and Intake: A Trane CleanEffects whole house air filtration system uses an ultraviolet-light air-purification system to kill germs, viruses, bacteria, mold and fungi—it removes 99.98% of airborne allergens that pass through the filter. Also, because the house is tight, there is the Trane FreshEffects energy-recovery ventilation (ERV) system to make sure there are healthy air changes within the home.

Heating and Cooling: Radiant-floor heating is located under the finished floors. The HVAC systems are highly

efficient 16 SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) and 13 EER (Energy Efficiency Ratio). And the system is controlled with the Trane ComfortLink, a wall-mounted touchpad that gives residents remote access to weather and more on its color touch-screen display.



Water Heating: A Noritz tankless unit supplies hot water on demand.



Water Savers: All faucets and fixtures are either high or very high efficiency—that. A drip irrigation system saves water used for watering outdoors.

Energy Control

Wall-mounted Trane *ComfortLink* touchpads control the home's Trane HVAC systems. Easy to operate, they can also adjust lights, fans and other electronics remotely.



Natural Connection

Floor-to-ceiling windows (left) open the home's rear wall to the backyard and loggia. The main living area of the home (right) has plenty of natural daylighting. The dining area ties in seamlessly with the backyard and kitchen, in an open, L-shaped plan that not only works socially, but allows both natural and mechanical ventilation to function more efficiently.



Chef's Delight

This luxurious, Gaggenau-equipped kitchen (above) features a long list of energy efficient tools: combi-steam oven, warming drawer, coffee machine, as well as cooktops—induction, Teppanyaki and gas—and an in-counter steamer. The extensive suite of appliances also includes a refrigerator, freezer and wine towers. Also part of the line are the ventilation hood and dishwasher (with *AquaSense* technology). Contemporary Kitchen Craft cabinets in maple with an Espresso Finish provide the finishing touches to a kitchen that is modern, but not sterile and cold.

The Chimney Effect

The architectural design lends itself to natural ventilation. Open the windows at the top of the stairs and a few on the first floor to create a natural chimney effect to ventilate the home. Notice, too, that all of the bedrooms have windows on two sides to facilitate natural cross-ventilation, even when bedroom doors are closed.



Every Drop

The master bathroom looks luxurious, but features low water use, thanks to a suite of Kohler products. The Reve dual-flush toilet meets EPA WaterSense specifications. Shower and lavatory faucets are very-high efficiency, saving 30% on showerheads and 45% on faucets, compared with traditional fixtures.



Suite Retreat

The master suite features the largest of the home's walk-in closets and water-efficient bathrooms and its own Napoleon combustion-sealed, direct-vent fireplace. A walkout glass doorway leads to a private second-story patio with built-in seating that overlooks the lush green roof.



Path of Peace

VISION House® Los Angeles lives up to its name with this main entrance on the home's south side. From the front garden, one meanders past a soothing fountain and along a peaceful garden path to reach this sheltered, beautiful handmade door.

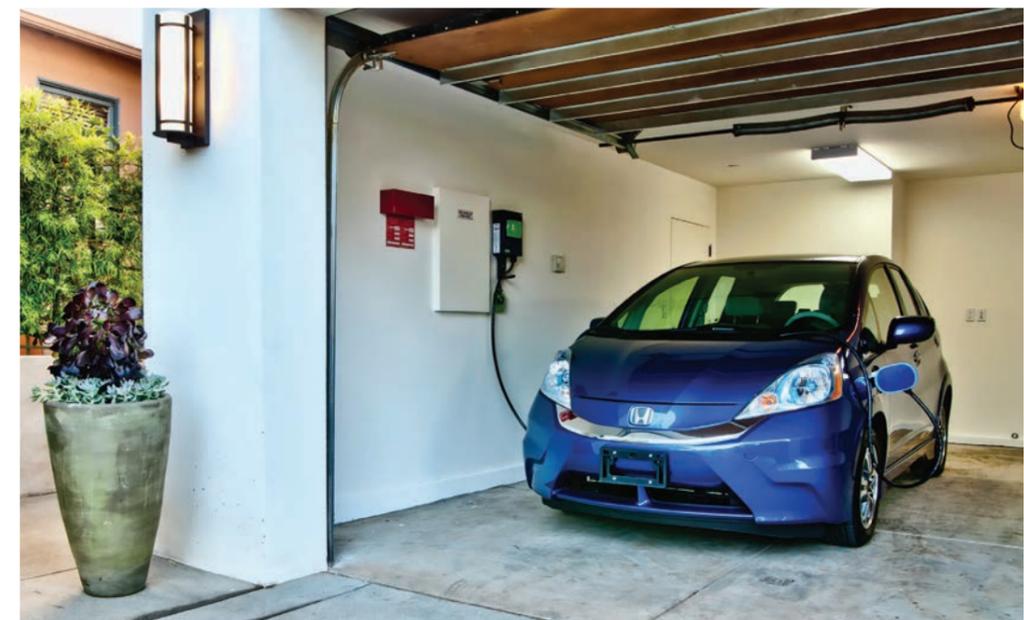


Root Guard

The shaded and illuminated Trex deck protects the roots of one of the existing trees preserved on the site, and frames another pocket of garden.

Charge It

The all-electric Honda Fit is on display at VISION House®, as is its Leviton charging station. And in case of power failure, there's a Kohler 20-kW gas-generated emergency home generator at the ready. Schlage's energy monitoring system (not shown) analyzes and monitors the home's energy use.



CREDIT: STRUCTURE HOME FOR THAT ONE

Flow-Thru Paving

Paving that was demolished to build the home was recycled to form garden walls. Recycled concrete "gravel" from GreenRock fills in spaces between patio surfaces, providing a base, and also serving as a permeable garden mulch.



dining, kitchen and living areas. The home has 4,290 sq. ft. of livable conditioned space and 4,539 sq. ft. under roof.

PARTNERING WITH NATURE

The design takes advantage of natural ventilation to greatly reduce the need for heating or cooling the home. Windows at the top of the stairs open to create a natural ventilation chimney. All rooms have cross-ventilation when the windows are open.

Radiant floors warm the home when it is chilly. Much of the rear wall on the home's east façade opens. These rear window walls accordion and disappear "to accommodate a transparent experience." The informal living spaces can live as a large pavilion open to the back gardens and loggia. Both the covered loggia and the grand living area feature fireplaces. And the loggia also has outdoor patio heaters.

And it is all surrounded by gardens: a few mature trees on the lot were saved. A green wall is visible from the kitchen window. The wall on the home's north side features low-light plants such as ferns, and helps separate the home from its neighbor, landscape designer Michelle Newman says. The backyard has a patch of grass—just a little, less than 3%

of the designed softscape, and a variety that uses little water. Newman says the grass area doubles as a retention basin to capture rainwater.

There is also a vegetable garden so that fresh greens and herbs are available just outside. There is room to grow berries, grapes and fruit trees. Two fountains, one in the front and one in the back, add the soothing sound of water to the home experience. There is even a composting area.

INNER BEAUTY

Interior designer Jill Wolff used a variety of natural and salvaged materials, a fairly neutral palette and easy-care features, such as white slipcovers. Many locally made furnishings came from Cisco Brothers, a Los Angeles-based company.

Upstairs are three bedrooms and a teen space that could become a fourth bedroom. Counting the home office on the first floor, there is potential for five bedrooms. Each bedroom has its own private bathroom and

walk-in closet. There are five and one-half bathrooms in the home.

The master suite occupies its own wing at the back of the home. It has the largest of the walk-in closets, a bathroom with a generous walk-in shower and a soaking tub. The bedroom includes its own fireplace and a private patio that overlooks the beautiful green roof located above the entry and formal dining areas.

The home is a CALGreen Code home, emphasizing optimized performance, durability, energy efficiency, water conservation, indoor air quality, efficient systems and sustainable materials. It is aiming for a Tier 2 status. Current calculations indicate that the energy performance for the home will be a 31% improvement over Title 24 requirements. The home is also striving for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification, California Energy Star certification, California Home Energy Efficiency—as well as Rating System (CHEERS) verification. **GB**

To learn more about the project visit:

www.greenbuildermag.com/VISION-HOUSE/VISION-House-Los-Angeles

Grand Opening: As VHLA throws open its doors, it's time to celebrate.



Guests mingle during the Grand Opening of VISION House® Los Angeles.



Mark Sapiro of Structure Home talks with guests in the loggia area.

Mark Sapiro and **Robert Kleiman** had good reason for a "high five" as they showed off their fine work on VHLA. Local chefs from Schaffer's of Venice provided organic delicacies, as Green Builder Media team members mingled with the consumer press and project sponsors.

Photos: Jeremy Broekman



Principals for Structure Home, Mark Sapiro and Robert Kleiman, give a high five for a successful opening.



Supporters of local organic and sustainable farms, Schaffer's of Venice, CA, provided some tantalizing treats at the grand opening.



Representatives from Gaggenau enjoy a front row view of the kitchen, which features many of their products.



Members of Green Builder Media, Structure Home and Green Builder Coalition take a moment to smile for the camera.