

From the Ground Up: Wood from 'deconstructed' house will be re-used in new green home

By Marie Morelli / The Post-Standard

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The Live Work Home house at 317–319 Marcellus St. has been built on the site of a house that was deconstructed. Wood reclaimed from the deconstructed house will be used to make floorboards for the new house.

Another update on the construction of three innovative green homes on Syracuse's Near West Side. Today: Full circle.

Syracuse, NY -- The loop will be closed when wood from a house that once stood at 319 Marcellus St. is used to make the floors in the innovative green home being built there.

Last summer, workers "deconstructed" the house nail by nail and board by board. They managed to salvage or recycle 86 percent of the materials.

Home HeadQuarters, general contractor for the From the Ground Up project on the city's Near West Side, will have some of the reclaimed wood reconditioned by Doug Holland, of Levanna Restoration Lumber in Auburn. It will be laminated onto a plywood substrate and laid down at the Live Work Home house, 317-319 Marcellus.

That's just one of the "green" features of Live Work Home. Others include airtight walls made of structural insulated panels, a flexible interior that allows the homeowner to reconfigure spaces without tearing down walls, a heat recovery ventilator that tempers cold air coming in so it doesn't have to be heated so much and skylight tubes that bring in lots of natural light.

The design was one of three winners of the From the Ground Up architecture competition sponsored by Home HeadQuarters, the Syracuse University School of Architecture and the Syracuse Center of Excellence. They are examples of sustainable, affordable homes that use the latest in energy-efficient technologies and building techniques.



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The From the Ground Up houses on Otisco Street: R-House (left) at 619 Otisco and TED (right) at 621 Otisco.

The other two houses — TED, at 621 Otisco St., and R-House, at 619 Otisco — also are under construction. Friday, the crew from Home HeadQuarters was trying to finish enclosing the many-angled R-House with ZIP Panels, engineered wall and roof boards with a built-in moisture barrier.

"I've framed about 500 houses, and this was the most difficult one," said Rob Kepner of Opportunity HeadQuarters, the training arm of Home HeadQuarters. Kepner said the crew made more than 100 architectural changes during construction.

"The framers were the designers on this one," he said, tweaking the home's architect, Della Valle Bernheimer. "It works on paper."

Here's a cool view of R-House on Otisco Street from Home HeadQuarters. It was shot from a lift at the roofline of TED -- nearly three stories up.



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Rob Kepner (left) and his brother Mike Kepner work Friday on the framing of the R-House at 619 Otisco St. Rob Kepner said the house with many angles was the most difficult he's ever framed.



Courtesy of Home Headquarters

A bird's-eye view of the R-House, 619 Otisco St.

The TED house is enclosed. The back of the house has a soaring loft space that rises almost three stories from the main floor to its peaked roof.

Back at Marcellus Street, Brian Kennedy and Zion Hayduke from O'Connor-Lane Mechanical Inc. were working in the basement Friday, installing water lines Friday for the kitchen and bathroom.

From the outside, the house looks long, skinny ... and small. From the inside, it looks a lot bigger, partly because it doesn't have any fixtures yet, but also because of the layout.

The front door leads into a small foyer. A closet will separate that from the galley kitchen. Behind that is a bathroom in three pieces -- the commode in one room, the tub in another and a double-sink vanity in between, with pocket doors on each room for privacy. The stairwell to the full basement comes next, and that will be open (with railings, instead of walls) for a more spacious feeling.

Another interesting detail about Live Work Home: Because the walls are airtight, the last thing the construction crew wants to do is punch holes in them for electrical outlets. So the outlets will be enclosed in a "curb" to be installed against the base of the walls. Now that's an electric baseboard for the 21st century.