The Blog

A DIY Passive Green House Design Takes Shape in Vermont

Posted on 07. Nov, 2011 by Maryruth Belsey Priebe in Articles

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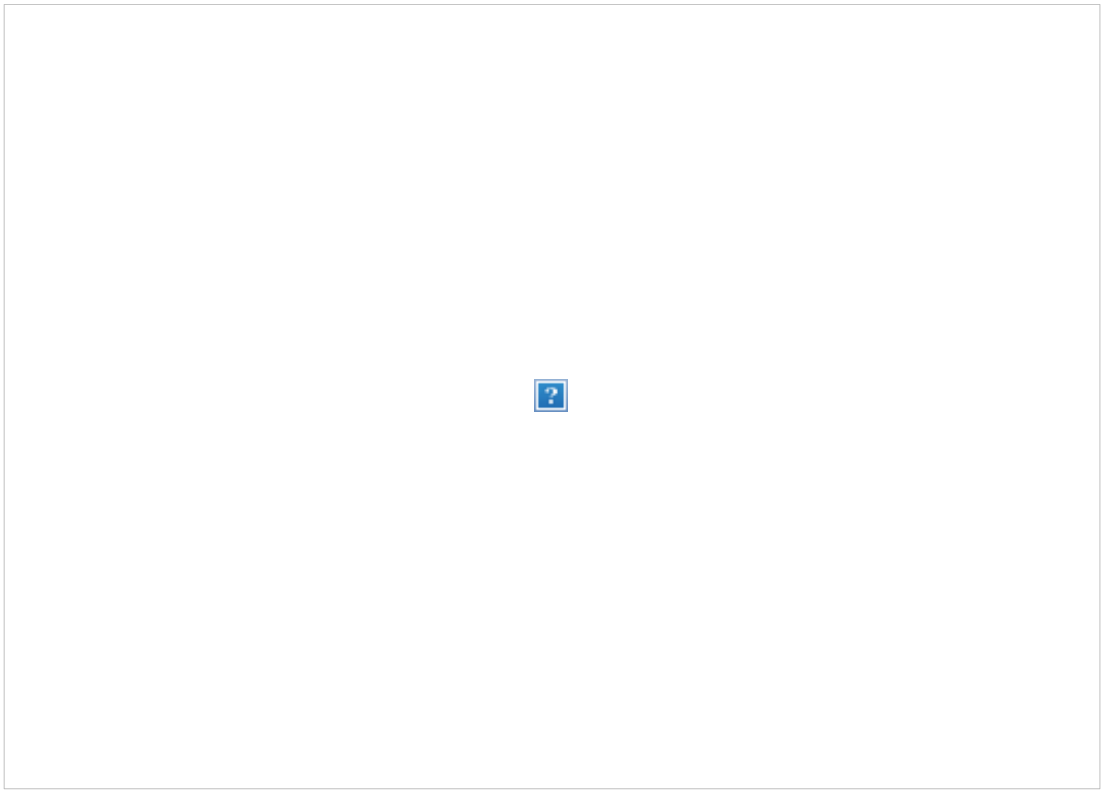
Interview: Passive House Consultant, Natalie



The folks over at BuildingGreen recently toured an “almost” passive house that’s being self-built by Andrea and Ted in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA. Though the couple will be employing Passivhaus concepts to complete their home, they aren’t yet sure if it will actually meet the stringent standards when they’re done – hence the “almost passive house.”

Though Andrea and Ted have been consulting with some experts (including a residential design/build company) on various aspects of their green house plans, they are calling this a DIY project because they’re doing a lot of the work themselves.

Edit: It turns out the project isn’t as DIY as Andrea and Ted have hoped. See Andrea’s comments below on Ted’s unlucky accident and how they’re tackling the build without him.

Some of the features include:

Leonard

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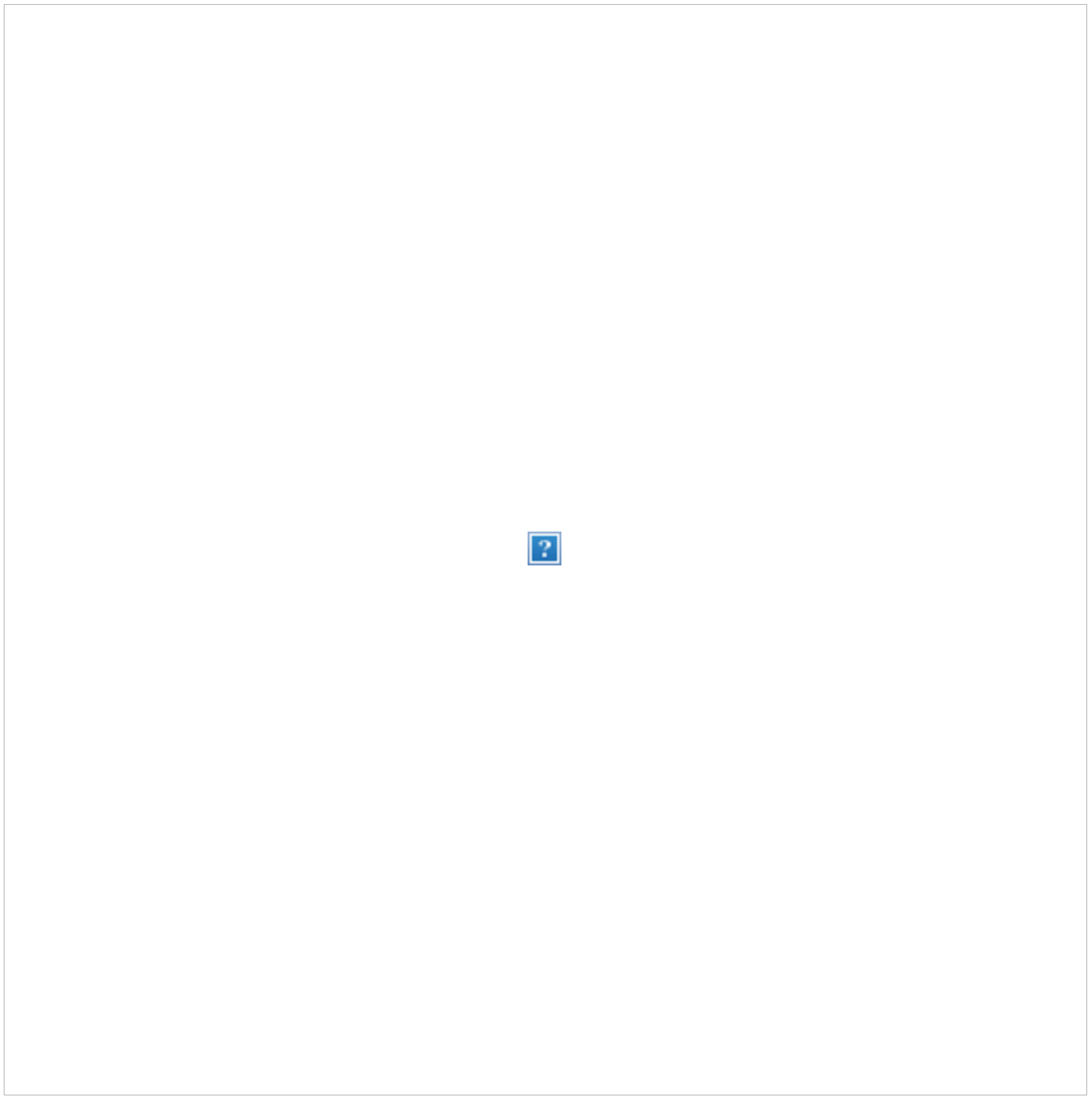
- A window budget that takes the window-to-wall ratio into account to determine how to balance heat load with desires for a view.
- High-efficiency, Passivhaus-certified windows and strategically designed overhangs to maximum heat gain in the winter and minimize it in the summer.
- Components that are pre-cut, pre-painted, and pre-constructed (like those in modular homes) to minimize waste and get around rain problems.
- Ultra-efficient insulation in the floors, walls, and ceilings, including polyisocyanurate rigid foam insulation.
- ZipTaped walls that are well sealed, and come with the added benefit of being deconstructable so that the drywall is reusable.
- Fluorescent lighting (T5s) and LEDs for energy efficiency.
- Designs that ensure quality but minimal resource consumption.

Their efforts prove that it isn't impossible to build your own DIY passive house – and that's it's possible to build a passive house even in a harsh winter area like Vermont! If you haven't already, you should definitely check out their blog where they detail how they're doing, what's going well, challenges they're overcoming, products they're choosing, and more. It's a great read for the green house design enthusiast.



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Tags: module, Passive House, passivhaus, superinsulation, windows

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