



A green house will grow in Felida

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BY ERIK ROBINSON, Columbian staff writer

Imagine a house that generates its own energy, captures and treats all of its water, and provides as much value for wildlife as it does for its human inhabitants.

Those are among the goals for a single-family house in Felida that could become North America's first home to meet the Cascadia Region Green Building Council's "Living Building Challenge."

A Vancouver builder and a La Center nonprofit organization have agreed to build the supergreen house north of Vancouver in 2008.

Fazzolari Custom Homes is working with La Center-based Project Green Build to design and build the sustainable house as part of a new subdivision in Felida called The Bungalows at Messner Estates. Timothy Buckley, owner of Greenstone Architecture, is the architect.

"This is extreme green building," said John Fazzolari, adding that the challenge has reinvigorated his passion for house-building.

Brandon Tauscher, the former high school teacher who founded Project Green Build, sees the project as an opportunity to showcase how to build a truly sustainable house while educating builders and the general public about the benefits.

"When you talk 20 to 30 years down the road, this is going to be more mainstream," Fazzolari said.

The Living Building Challenge leaves it to building designers to find ways to meet six broad ideals.

For example, the house must generate at least as much energy as it uses. Fazzolari and Tauscher anticipate including solar panels along with a solar water heater. The house would be linked to the energy grid, but a meter would track how much power the panels generate compared to how much electricity the house consumes. The Green Building Council would certify the house only after tracking 12 months of utility bills.

Eden Brukman, research director for the Cascadia Region Green Building Council in Portland, said roughly 60 building projects across the country are currently being designed or built to meet the Green Building Challenge.

She applauded Fazzolari and Tauscher for taking up the challenge.

"They might be the first in Washington, and they might be the first single-family home," she said.

Suburban living is not the standard template devised by sustainability advocates, who tend to prefer homes with smaller footprints where residents can walk or ride transit to shop, work or play. As suburbanites begin to embrace green building practices, Brukman said, they are likely to look for other areas where they can promote sustainability.

"It does seem to be contagious," she said. "The more you do, the more you want to do."

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