



LBC: MORE ON THE “PETALS”

Updates on our Living Building Challenge projects:

Wright Builders’ ongoing Living Building Challenge (LBC) projects, the R. W. Kern Center at Hampshire College and The Hitchcock Center for the Environment, both in Amherst, are making strides in the construction phase and as previously mentioned, must pass the performance standards after construction completion in order to be certified LBC. The seven performance categories, or ‘Petals’ continue to watch over every step of the project. They include: Place, Water, Energy, Health & Happiness, Materials, Equity and Beauty.

In our Spring 2015 Newsletter, we talked about the Materials and Water Petals. In this issue, we’ll look at Net Zero Energy and Place.

NET ZERO ENERGY PETAL: The intent of the Energy Petal is to signal a new age of design, wherein the built environment relies solely on renewable forms of energy and operates year round in a safe, pollution-free manner. In addition, it aims to prioritize reductions and optimization before technological solutions are applied to eliminate wasteful spending of energy, resources, and dollars. 105% of the project’s energy needs must be supplied by on-site renewable energy on a net annual basis, without the use of on-site combustion of fossil fuels.

PLACE PETAL: Restoring a healthy interrelationship with nature: creating environments that optimize physical and psychological health and well being. The intent of the Place Petal is to realign how people understand and relate to the natural environment that sustains us. The human built

environment must reconnect with the deep story of place and the unique characteristics found in every community so that story can be honored, protected and enhanced.

Excerpted from International Living Future Institute’s Living Building Challenge SM 14 | 3.0 living-future.org/lbc



Kern Center upper structure: Nordic LAM “Glulam” timber, installed by Bensonwood of NH.



NESEA Pro Tour September 2016: R. W. KERN CENTER

Both LBC projects were also featured in The New England Sustainable Energy Association's (NESEA) Pro Tour in September. BuildingEnergy Pro Tours are half-day tours of high performance homes and businesses all over the Northeast. Pro Tours are an opportunity for sustainable building professionals to get to see projects in progress with their own eyes, share their knowledge and learn from their colleagues. (nesea.org)

The tour of the 17,000 square-foot R.W. Kern Center, was led by Chris Nielson of Bruner/Cott Architects, Project Manager, Tom Lucia (WBI) and Jonathan Wright. In the fall of 2014, Hampshire College broke ground on the Kern Center, its first new building in decades. Upon its completion, the Kern Center will be a multifunctional learning, teaching, and exhibition space; the point of entry for prospective students

and their families into the Hampshire community; and the location of the admissions financial aid and new student programs offices. Project completion is scheduled for late winter of 2016.

The tour of the second site, the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, was led by our Construction Manager, Mark Ledwell - Wright Builders' Co-Principal, Sam Batchelor of designLAB Architects of Boston and Chris Riddle, the owner's architectural representative. The new 9,000 square-foot building will be New England's first public environmental education center to meet the LBC (version 2.1). This building will more than double the Center's current capacity to host programs for all ages, while also being a one-of-a-kind teaching tool. (Completion - summer of 2016). www.hitchcockcenter.org.

NEWLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

Work on a two family residence was completed in early summer, with design work by Kraus Fitch Architects. The replacement for an earlier building was reoriented for southern exposure for passive and active solar gain. PV panels by Pioneer Valley Photo Voltaics cover the south facing roof of the simple but nicely detailed building, resulting in a HERS rating of (-21). This means performance, in terms of standards, will be much better than net-zero, with no combustion of fossil fuels on site. We are proud of our association with the Chang family in this forward looking project, and have nominated Sidney Chang for a "Green Giant" award from NESEA for his courage and foresight in undertaking rental housing at this performance level!

More and more often, as time goes on, we are asked to assist extending families with housing for another generation. Not just imminent children, but parents and grandparents as well! This old custom is being reinvented so that elders can enjoy quality of life and the company of family. We are excited to continue our decades long experience and tradition with aging in place projects. This private residence in Belchertown was guided through the permitting, design, civil engineering and design steps by Roger Cooney our VP of Sales, Estimating and Design, and resulted an excellent addition to the home spaces for this household of three generations.



ONGOING PROJECTS



At Village Hill, the long awaited Flats West is complete, and our first three buyers have moved in. The model is open and there are additional units for sale starting at \$479,900 fully equipped. These homes feature 6 units in the building, private garage area underneath the building, elevator access, and 1525 square foot 2 and 3 bedroom homes. Total comfort, ease of ownership, and expected LEED gold certification and ENERGY STAR Tier 3 make these a path to a sustainable future, as well as a comfortable, healthy, quiet one, in a thriving neighborhood. **These homes are available now.**



New high-performance home in Hawley, with Ashfield stone patios to enjoy the views of the Western Mass hills.
Architect: Bruce Coldham



This high performance whole home renovation has recreated the home's original grandeur with particular attention to its historic background and elements.

NEW PROJECTS



We have begun design on a new private home to be constructed in the early spring of 2016. This home is planned for LEED Platinum and will be ENERGY STAR Tier 3 too.



This ICF insulated block small super efficient house in Montague is under construction now. Think very low energy costs!



river valley co-op

wild about local

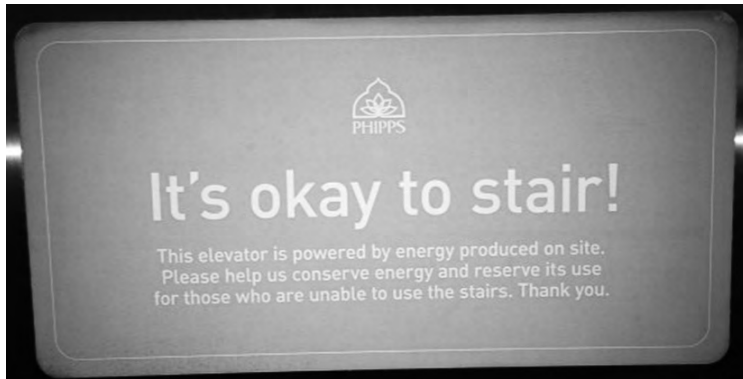
This fall we are back helping renovate the interior of our beloved River Valley Coop as well as update their branding! Working closely with Jody Baker of Tom Douglas Architects, as well as project engineers and the utilities, major new strides in interior and exterior lighting and equipment efficiency are being accomplished, along with an expanded wine and cheese area, expanded bulk area, and a host of other improvements. We congratulate our Coop friends and fellow member-owners on the vision and success of this remarkable institution!



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WBI STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Wright Builders strives to keep their sales, estimating and production teams at the forefront of technology and design and build practices. This Fall, our design team is taking advantage of 3 unique learning programs offered by NESEA, including “Passive House in the Real World”; tips, tricks, pitfalls and what to expect when making a Passive House a reality. Lead by Mike DUclos. “Deep Energy Retrofits”; learning how to “fix what we have” with Marc Rosenbaum and lastly, “Building Energy Analytics” with Andy Shapiro.



In addition, two of our production team attended an intensive “Living Product Expo” in Pittsburgh, hosted by the International Living Future Institute, the entity behind the creation of Living Building Challenge (LBC). Sol, who leads the materials team for the Kern Center notes that “Going to the Living Product Challenge in Pittsburgh was an amazing opportunity to learn from the leaders of innovation in the Building Industry today. I learned a great deal about how some manufacturers are going about changing their operations for the benefit of the environment.” And Phil says that “At the Living Product Expo in Pittsburg we were able to experience innovative buildings like the Center for Sustainable Landscapes and the SEED classroom at the Phipps Conservatory and listen to some truly inspiring individuals like Arlene Blum, a biophysical chemist and founder of the Green Science Policy, and Bill Strickland, a MacArthur Fellowship Genius Award winner. It was great to see the amazing work that these people have done and continue to do. It really makes you appreciate the change that we’re working towards with our own Living Building Challenge projects, regardless of the challenges that they pose.”

MATTERS OF *PRINCIPAL* — Jonathan Wright

We own a small fleet of VW TDI vehicles (3), purchased for the reasons we all thought were true, now disgraced. What to do? We have to wait on the fix, if there is one. So far, we have traded in one of the cars to get it off the road. The dealer and VW of America have been helpful. This scam is a reminder of the greenwashing that goes on all the time – Sustainability Lite. Even when we do our very best, at times it is not good enough for the planet. Pursuit of the Living Building Challenge has shed broad light for us on what building materials are made of and how dangerous some of them are for humans and the planet.

We are heartened by moves to improve pay levels in smaller businesses, including a recent announcement from the Haymarket Café in Northampton. At our company we

have recently completed a comprehensive review with outside help of all our positions and what we pay. We re-aligned pays, adding substantially to payrolls in some areas, to address perceived inequities. It adds costs, but is directly related to a sense of wellbeing in our workplace. We are proud to remain competitive, indeed to provide leadership in compensation and benefits, and to support our staff and their families at appropriate levels. Our pay scale range from top to bottom is less than 4 to 1.

For 25 years we have offered company paid disability, which Jonathan just realized is NOT a common standard! This fall, it will provide for a maternity leave pay of 8 weeks for one of us, and has in recent years made a huge difference when illness struck one of our working families.

WBI EMPLOYEE PROFILE: JAY HEILMAN

Jay works as a project manager for Wright Builders, bringing 20 years of construction and related management experience, along with great organizational and business skills. Jay has been leading the Village Hill efforts at Wright Builders, as well as recently managing projects at Smith College and around the Valley. He also supervises the carpentry and labor crews. With his easy laugh and highly regarded creative problem solving ability, he is a terrific colleague for all of us at Wright Builders.



He and his family, including his in laws, his interior designer wife Jenn, and children Ariel and Owen, have gathered the last of their apple harvest at their home in Heath, and moved into making cider.

UPDATES ON VILLAGE HILL The Upper Ridge Phases III & IV



Flats East across the street from Flats West is in pre-sales, with one unit sold, and occupancy expected October 2016. Construction has started, and these homes feature many similar attributes to the sister building, with the added enhancement of first floor level patios, and covered canopy to adjacent garage structures.



Also at The Upper Ridge, our current and likely final signature project at Village Hill, we are starting the first of three single family homes within the condominium association, which allows the owners a new level of privacy, while freeing up one's lifestyle from all the worries of maintenance, insurance and related property cares. These are highly customizable within the footprints, and our designers are standing by!! Starting well equipped with 2 car garage, four bedrooms and three baths at \$599,000.



Both homes have two bedrooms up, and the 3 bedroom has a master bedroom on the first floor and enjoy private patios, a single garage and outdoor parking. With on-demand gas water heating and high efficiency heat and



air-conditioning, SEER 15 or greater, with Energy Recovery Ventilation technology, gas cooking, these homes are designed to be ENERGY STAR Tier 3 and LEED Certified compliant.



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It seems like everywhere you go in western New England, Wright Builders has been there too. Projects on the Amherst, Smith and Hampshire College campuses, beautiful new LEED certified residential homes in Northampton, Belchertown, and Amherst and commercial buildings like Florence Bank and the Atkinson Building, all add to the fabric of our community. For over 50 years, New England Public Radio has been a part of that fabric too, reaching listeners from Hartford to Brattleboro, Worcester to New York state with our unique brand of public radio programming on WFCR and the NEPR News Network.

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