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Creative Team Designs and Builds Affordable Urban Vermont Home

Burlington, Vermont

What happens when you combine a local artist who dreams of an affordable house with an industrial feel in an urban setting, an architect with a desire for more contemporary house design in Vermont, and a construction management firm for planning, establishing budgets and timelines, and who brings together a network of local professionals? You get what you want in Burlington, Vermont.

The high cost of housing for the middle class in Vermont is a serious topic in many circles. It is seen as a major deterrent to encourage skilled workers to the state, having the potential for serious economic growth problems. This challenge was one of the many reasons it has taken the thinking and planning for the new house on Chase Street in exciting, new directions. The team looked at the situation as an opportunity to highlight each of their professional skills and resources. The creative problem solving approach was applied to all aspects of the dwelling; from the 8000 pound concrete pilings used for the postage sized lot to a design to maximize the feeling of spaciousness in the 500 square foot studio apartment and the 1200 square foot owner's apartment.

But no new home in Vermont would be successful without being energy efficient, easy to maintain, and a maximum use of sustainable and green materials. This house meets all those criteria.

Over the past few years, Kirk Williams, a Vermont metal smith, had collaborated with Christian Brown, a Jericho, Vermont architect and furniture designer, on several residential and commercial projects. Williams decided that Brown might be the perfect architect to help him design and build his small-house dream. The two meshed their ideas, and then called upon Mark Bonser, owner of the professional construction management firm RedHawk Limited to oversee the project.

The result of the three working together is a rather special home, from the aspect of design, materials used, and the method of construction. A pre-cast foundation and a steel I-beam super structure, engineered lumber, rubber membrane roofing material, ultra high efficient foam insulation, on-demand thankless water heater, are some of the features incorporated into a personality-plus, open loft-like space, flooded with natural light and abundant ventilation. A home designed and built for a cost within the range of a middle-income family.

The trio plans to showcase the house in July and invite professionals and the public for special viewings. This is not your typical Vermont house in any way, shape or even materials. Perhaps a new Vermont urban vernacular has been born.

For house specifications, additional images, or further information, contact: Lorna-Kay Peal, 802.598.5342