

SUSTAINABLE HOME CONSTRUCTION DESIGNS



IMAGINING AND IMPLEMENTING A GREENER WORLD WITH SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

by Christopher Cussat

Above: 55 Jefferson, a home applying for LEED silver certification.

HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE a difference can inspire great motivation, and can help drive individuals toward reaching their goals. Scott H. Cartwright, president of Sustainable Home Construction Designs (SHC), is one such individual. Creating global change by green building on a local level, Cartwright formed SHC in 2007. Today the company creates eco-friendly homes while concentrating on saving money for homeowners. Cartwright's energy-efficiency calculations generally save his clients 30 to 60 percent on their utility bills.

In addition to ensuring energy efficiency, SHC also focuses on evaluating each home for indoor air quality, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Cartwright adds, "I really want to pay attention to [air quality], so the health of the people living in the house can greatly improve."

Here are a few examples of SHC's green practices:

- utilizing only cellulose or spray-foam insulation;
- reusing and recovery of material in existing house;



“Part of my inspiration is to make homeowners and contractors more comfortable and change how the industry is building.”

Scott H. Cartwright, President

- recycling construction waste as much as possible;
- installing solar power for hot water, as well as solar photovoltaics (PV);
- using paint and purchasing products that are sustainable and do not emit VOCs.

SHC is also one of the only contractors in the region that tapes duct seams. “I tape every seam because typically on a conventional, forced-air heating system, 30 percent of heat is lost through the duct seams,” Cartwright explains. This practice also makes heating units run less frequently, and as a result, the system does not have to work as hard, which lengthens the lifespan of the equipment.

Another unique SHC practice is making its homes airtight. Cartwright notes, “We install heat recovery and ventilation

(HRV) systems which exhaust stale air from homes, and then replaces it with fresh air pumped through an ion filter. Everything is changing toward structures being air tight and I want SHC to be a leader in this movement.”

This dedication to green building is closely tied to Cartwright’s vision for SHC, as well as his concern for environmental issues. A believer in preparing for those sustainable trends that are gaining popularity throughout the construction industry. Cartwright adds, “With many corporations moving to LEED programs, I decided to take a number of LEED workshops, and I will soon test to become an LEED AP.” Cartwright is now an associate member of the AIA and USGBC. Through its dedication to environmental consciousness and specialized training, Cartwright wants SHC to become the best

SUSTAINABLE HOME CONSTRUCTION
DESIGNS AT A GLANCE

LOCATION: Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
Home renovations and construction

AVERAGE ANNUAL SALES: \$1 million+

EMPLOYEES: Sole proprietor

Above: Scott Cartwright, president.

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Scott H. Cartwright, President

at what it does. “Part of my inspiration for this is to make home owners and contractors more comfortable, and change how the industry is building. I want to become a better builder than anyone else out there, and prove this is the way things should be built.”

Cartwright hopes to achieve this goal by educating the public until the long-term benefits of building eco-friendly homes is understood. “Even though it’s worth spending the extra money up front because home owners will reap the savings for years to come, people don’t look at it that way, but I try to explain everything to them.” So although SHC’s services may cost more than traditional contractors, the investment will be paid back exponentially through future energy and potential health cost savings.

Nevertheless, Cartwright feels the government has to take the lead on green practices if real change is to occur. He explains, “With today’s climate [literally], it is crucial that we cut energy usage anywhere we can, and renovation and new construction are perfect opportunities.” In fact, many state and local governments are now taking important strides. He adds, “For example, I would like to see more government building codes reflect the Town of Greenburgh’s [NY] model, where all new residential construction is mandated to comply with Energy Star standards.”

Cartwright is confident that SHC’s business model will help it continue to grow and be successful, while the building codes catch up to its high standards. As the person that the company’s clients deal with directly, Cartwright feels this makes the entire design-build

construction process much easier. Customer satisfaction is evident on the faces of SHC’s clients. According to Cartwright, those smiles are the only thing that is more important to him than saving the environment. “I love knowing that I build eco-friendly houses, but I also enjoy seeing that smile on my clients’ faces. When they experience living in a house that now has healthier air, and is also saving them money, they just seem happier—it’s pretty amazing.” G&Q

Locations:

Congers, NY
845-268-9245

Fishkill, NY
845-831-8077

Liberty, NY
845-292-8282

Mahopac, NY
845-628-3431

Middletown, NY
845-342-5555

Port Jervis, NY
845-856-1122

Rosendale, NY
845-658-8331

Rockaway, NJ
973-627-0160

Sparta, NJ
973-729-3155

Vails Gate, NY
845-562-5442



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