

A Leader in GreenHouse Design

Durham Custom Homes puts environmental spin on its accessible home



Wheelchair accessible kitchen

Durham Custom Homes recently completed the first fully accessible home in Ontario that is built to GreenHouse standards—a bungalow designed for a man with special needs and his family.

The house features a three-step elevator, custom designed kitchen, bathrooms and corridors that allows the owner confined to a wheelchair to manoeuvre around the house as easily as an able-bodied person.

For Dennis and Melissa Radovic and their four-year-old son Bryson, the home is perfect. “They really were prepared to customize everything for us,” says Dennis, who was pleasantly surprised how open the builder was to their design and material changes. The energy efficiency features and lower environmental impact that their house will have was also a key factor in their buying decision. “The natural resources of our planet are limited, and we all have to do our part.”

The home will save the Radovics about 30 per cent in their utility costs over a standard Ontario Building Code built home. Furthermore, there

is a mandated 25 per cent reduction in indoor water consumption. During construction, Durham diverted at least 25 per cent of construction waste from landfills, reduced use of lumber by 10 per cent and used materials with varying amounts of pre and post consumer recycled content, says Victor Fiume of Durham Homes.

GreenHouse certified construction is a standard that was introduced in September 2008 by EnerQuality, Fiume explains. “On September 16, 2008 we held a groundbreaking for the first ever GreenHouse to be built in Ontario. At that time we chose to make GreenHouse a standard form of construction in every home we build. The Radovics read about our accessible building program in a newspaper story, did some research on the Energy Star program and decided to come out and see us. At that time GreenHouse was not yet launched, but as soon as it was we incorporated those features into their home, at no additional cost to them.

“Energy efficiency and environmentally responsible homes are the logical outcome of building a better home. Building an energy-efficient home does not in itself make it a better home, but building the house right does mean it will be energy-efficient,” Fiume says. **OHB**

What you need to know about GreenHouse certification:

- 1. Natural resources management:** Use advanced framing techniques to reduce wood used while delivering greater effective insulation levels.
- 2. Effective use of resources:** Use products that have been diverted from landfill.
- 3. Water conservation:** Reduce water consumption with dual flush toilets, low flow showerheads, etc.
- 4. Indoor air quality:** Reduce indoor air contaminants and eliminate potential for mould growth.
- 5. Waste diversion:** Reduce landfill waste by 25 per cent by separating waste into proper containers.

More information at www.greenhousecertified.ca.