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CONSTRUCTION

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Barn Raising: Where LEED Platinum and History Meet

Dovetail Construction's new office: first LEED Platinum zero net energy building on the National Register of Historic Places

By: **Nina Patel**



Credit: Lee Brauer

Take It Down

Dovetail Construction renovated this 1907 electric trolley barn by taking it down to the steel frame.

Over the years, Dovetail Construction had incorporated green products and practices into its projects, but when it came time for owners Paul and Julie Weissend to move into an office, they decided to “walk the walk” and remodel an existing Richmond, Va., building to earn LEED Platinum. “We wanted something compelling,” Julie says. And they found just that in a 1907 electric trolley car barn with a great view of Richmond. Julie’s research led her to discover that Richmond was the first U.S. city to have an electric trolley, in 1888.

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During the process of converting the building into their office, the Weissends earned their LEED AP credentials, added a secondary goal of making the building net zero, and researched to add the building to the National Register of Historic Places. **“We believe this is the first building in the U.S. that is LEED Platinum, listed on the National Register, and net zero energy,”** Julie says.

The building features Icynene foam and rigid foam insulation, insulated windows, energy recovery ventilators, geothermal heating and cooling, LED lights, low-flow toilets, and low-VOC paints. Solar panels that contribute toward the net zero energy goal are on the property.

The Weissends applied for several tax credits to renovate the building, including Virginia state and federal historic tax credits, a 30% federal rebate and 20% state grant for the cost of the solar panel installation, and a 30% federal rebate for the cost of the geothermal heat pump. The building also received a Virginia Enterprise Zone grant for the rehab, which Paul says accounted for 8% of construction costs.

The building provides a place for the company’s clients to see green techniques firsthand. “Whether or not they use all the different things we do, it gives them confidence that we can build their project without any problems,” Paul says.

Though Dovetail Construction hosts community events at the building, hoping to inspire and educate the public about green practices, the Weissends aren’t passively waiting for green projects to come to them; they recently purchased and are renovating another historic building.

—*Nina Patel, senior editor, REMODELING.*

SLIDESHOW



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