

BUILDING GREEN

Continued from page 1

Worden already employs an aluminum skiff with a four-stroke outboard motor to reach Esther Island.

Worden is also helping Wendy Schmidt with the greening of the new NRTA terminal and Mitchell's Book Corner, both in their conceptual design phase. For Schmidt, Worden will be working with National Grid on energy efficiency solutions, tapping the New York City consulting firm Terrapin Bright Green, for green building strategies to include insulation, windows, building materials, lighting, floor coverings and paints.

"What we really hope to do is to use those projects as a way of developing a model for improving the energy profile of historic buildings," said Worden. "What we learn from those projects we can present to the community to use or not use."

LET'S GO GREEN

In this go-green world there exists a dichotomy of building construction realities separated by a spectrum of emerald hues.

Over the last year or so, the Nantucket building community has been abuzz with green possibilities, some of which are becoming reality while others are still being developed.

"I think there are a lot of heads and hearts in the right place, but I don't think there is anything cohesive, per se," said Designer Brook Meerbergen. "We're taking baby steps out here while a lot of places have been doing this for a while because we have so many constraints."

As grandiose as green building plans can get on Nantucket, many of them must pass muster at the Historic District Commission, unless their elements are hidden from view. Things like solar panels and wind turbines have been turning up on the HDC agenda with more frequency lately, but they are by no means the dominant listings among Revisions, Additions and Renovations.

"It hasn't really taken the form of applications in that respect, but we've had a significant amount of talk and questions," said HDC Administrator Mark Voigt.

That, however, is coming sooner than many might think.

Small Friends of Nantucket is framing its new green schoolhouse, and Architect Chip Webster is about ready to move into his own green-built house packed with building parts and fixtures made from renewable or recycled materials. And, of course, consider the aforementioned vision and accomplishments of Alan Worden and Wendy Schmidt.

Also, Web site designer Malcolm Brooks and Pi Pizza owner Evan Marley have built green houses, both of which have nearly identical German solar technology and energy-efficient heating systems, prefab insulated foundations and double-insulated windows and Korean appliances that use a minimum of electricity. In 2005, Vanessa Noel opened Hotel Green at 33 Centre St. Though not built by LEED standards, Noel painted the interior of her

GROUND LEVEL VIEW

Outer Cape Finishers employee Kurt Kavanaugh fits a double-thick layer of rigid foam insulation at the Small Friends construction site yesterday. The insulation, which will be covered with solid concrete, will help keep building's floors warm.



ROB BENCHLEY/The Independent

building with environmentally sound milk-based paints and outfitted it with recycled lampshades, cardboard chairs and hemp shower curtains.

IT HELPS EVERYBODY

"Green" is the latest word to describe the simple, non-glamorous way people have been saving money for decades through the use of fluorescent light bulbs, insulation, energy-efficient appliances, heating systems and double-paned, heat trapping windows. Nantucket Housing Office Administrator Aaron Marcavitch calls them "high-performance homes."

It is the direction that the Housing Office is headed, both for the rental houses it manages and those for purchase under its Nantucket Housing Needs Covenant Program.

"Green technology generally saves you money. Well, that's what we're trying to do is help people on restricted incomes by saving on their energy costs. It helps everybody," said Marcavitch.

The Nantucket Housing Office's high-performance housing initiative is taking pointers from the Vineyard Housing Trust program. That program helps Cozy Hearth Development Corp.'s affordable housing development, Jenny Lane, to make several of its affordable houses green.

Habitat for Humanity on Nantucket is in the process of building two green houses — designed by Chip Webster & Associates — for qualified islanders.

And Sustainable Nantucket's Green Council, chaired by Milton Rowland & Associates Architect Rebecca Weld, is exploring green building practices on the island.

"As part of this [the Green Council], we have a group of people working on researching what other towns are doing for green building with the hope that we would be talking to our town about adopting incentives for green building," said Sustainable Nantucket Executive Director Michelle Whelan.

The Brunswick, Maine-based Citizenrë, locally represented by Color Graphics owner Bruce Marshall-Jones,

is offering a solar panel leasing program on Nantucket. The company installs enough solar panels on a building to power it and leases the equipment to the owner for a flat rate of around 85 percent of their average annual electricity bill.

Marshall-Jones said that about 30 Nantucketers have already signed up for the systems that come with a global warming guarantee.

Because Citizenrë's solar panel manufacturing plant will not be in production until, at the earliest, this fall, the company's pilot program in major metropolitan areas across the country includes the installation of 1,000 systems using off-the-shelf panels and wiring. It is unlikely that Nantucketers already committed to the program will be part of this early-bird program.

"Boston is one of the first metropolitan areas where they will be doing this," said Marshall-Jones. "[But], I can't say whether the installer will be coming all the way out to Nantucket."

PRESERVATION IS THE ORIGINAL GREEN

Whereas mainland greenies can top their roofs with banks of solar panels, plant wind turbines in their back yards and build all manner of south-facing structures with banks of double-paned insulated windows, Nantucket is more or less limited to interior atmosphere-saving techniques.

The Historic District Commission's architectural and historic preservation bible, "Building with Nantucket in Mind," keeps these new-fangled houses in check, especially in the old historic districts in Nantucket town and Sconset.

But, the commission is working to accommodate property owners' wants and needs.

Meerbergen recently secured a favorable 3-2 vote to install two solar panels on a Liberty Street house, satisfying the HDC's historic materials concerns by camouflaging them as roof shuttles.

"I was very stoked about the sentiment on the board. They were very enthusiastic," he said.

Last spring, the HDC also approved a wind turbine for Bartlett's Ocean View Farm for the production of most of the farm's electricity. Both of these approvals, however, came as a result of the HDC working with applicants to make their projects blend in with their surroundings, a growing challenge to which the HDC says it will adapt. "We're here to consider new information and try to find an appropriate compromise, or blend of maintaining the existing character and incorporating new technologies," said Voigt.

Rebecca Weld, partner in the design-build company Verde: Nantucket Green Build, believes acceptance of these new technologies and ways of approaching house building on Nantucket will evolve more rapidly as energy costs rise and building materials become more scarce. Weld's business partners are Ian Konecko and Burr Tupper.

"Fuel costs are still going up and that's making it more real, said Weld. "If anything, my interest has gotten deeper and broader on how we can make this better."

On the municipal level, Article 95 on this year's Town Warrant calls for the town to follow LEED certification guidelines when building any new public structures. Article 101 seeks voter approval for requiring the HDC to adopt a policy on solar energy systems.

GREEN PIONEERS

Cork and bamboo flooring, blown-in isonene insulation, Energy Star appliances, compact fluorescent and LED lighting, low volatile organic compound paints and carpeting, reclaimed wood, framing materials certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and reconstituted recycled materials are some of the green things built into Architect Chip Webster's house off South Shore Road.

Although these building materials are not yet as dominant as white cedar shingles and cedar trim, their use and interest in them is gaining ground.

"We're getting more and more clients interested in it and integrating it into more and more of our projects,"