

# Living In Columbia

## in a Lakeside GREEN HOME



Chris Hardwicke, owner of Fit Fast of Shandon, is a local fitness expert and “Renaissance man” who sees the value in living close to the natural environment and connected to health and the community. Over the years, he has refined his vision of the ideal “green dream home,” with his latest embodiment of that dream located right in the middle of Columbia, on an unusual home site in Heathwood—the house is accessed via a street-level bridge and is perched over a ravine, which makes it seem as if it is hanging in the treetops. This super-insulated modern home has a panoramic, spectacular view of a spring-fed lake, trees and wildlife

that will convince you you’re many miles from civilization, yet you’re still downtown.

### Chris describes his project:

“In 1996, I wanted to build one of those ‘green’ homes. I had owned six other houses over the years, including a 100-year-old log cabin in Asheville. Each house was progressively closer to my dream home. Before this, my last one was on a river, and I added a 24-foot tall all-glass passive solar room which heated the entire downstairs in winter.

This home would be different,

though, as I would be building an all-new house from the ground up. I found a secluded lot on a pond on a dead-end street, right in the center of Columbia. The lot was beautiful, with many magnolia and walnut trees, and even a mountain laurel. It was one of the steepest lots in the city, but having moved here from the mountains, I was undaunted.

I decided to build a Deltac Engineered Home, the front of which would be 28 feet in the air sitting atop concrete and steel piers and reached from the street by a walking bridge. My decision to build up high came through my desire for early morning natural light from across the pond and greater afternoon light from the other



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side of the house. After plotting the path of the sun across my lot, I oriented the house and placed skylights for maximum winter-light exposure. The round shape would allow me to capture a 180 degree panoramic view of the lake and woods. Since my exterior walls would be 50 percent glass, I chose triple-glazed argon gas-filled low-e windows and doors throughout the house. For the skylights, I used Velux brand Energy Star-rated venting units, made right in South Carolina. I put them in every room, even the bathroom, rendering electric lights unnecessary most of the day. Along with fresh air, natural light has tremendous health benefits physically, emotionally and psychologically.



mold. It is dampened and sprayed on while sticky, and completely fills and seals all cavities in the house and provides greater resistance to air leakage. A big surprise was when the finished home was virtually soundproof, which presents a very calming environment.

Many other green features are to be found throughout the house, such as an on-demand hot water heater, central air intake in each room,

I instructed Deltec to frame the 8-foot panels with 2x6 studs, thereby adding 50 percent more insulation space. I chose cellulose insulation for all walls, ceilings and floors,

because it is the ultimate eco-friendly insulation. Using eight times less energy to make than typical fiberglass, it is made with recycled newspaper, which is then treated with non-toxic borate compounds to resist fire, insects and



and a double air filtration system. The house is a modest size at 1,600 square feet, and utility bills have been as low as \$58, and average around \$125 per month, without making any effort to restrict energy to conserve. It truly feels like I am on vacation every time I walk across the bridge and onto the deck."

Everyone likely has their own dream house planned in their imagination, to be built when the time is right—hope-



fully with the best and latest energy-saving and Earth-sustaining technology. While this house was Chris' dream, life changes made it necessary for him to put it on the market, hopefully to be sold to, in his words, "someone that truly appreciates the special nature" of this in-town house nestled in the lakeside trees.

For more info, call Chris Hardwicke at 803-240-5241. See ad, back page.

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