

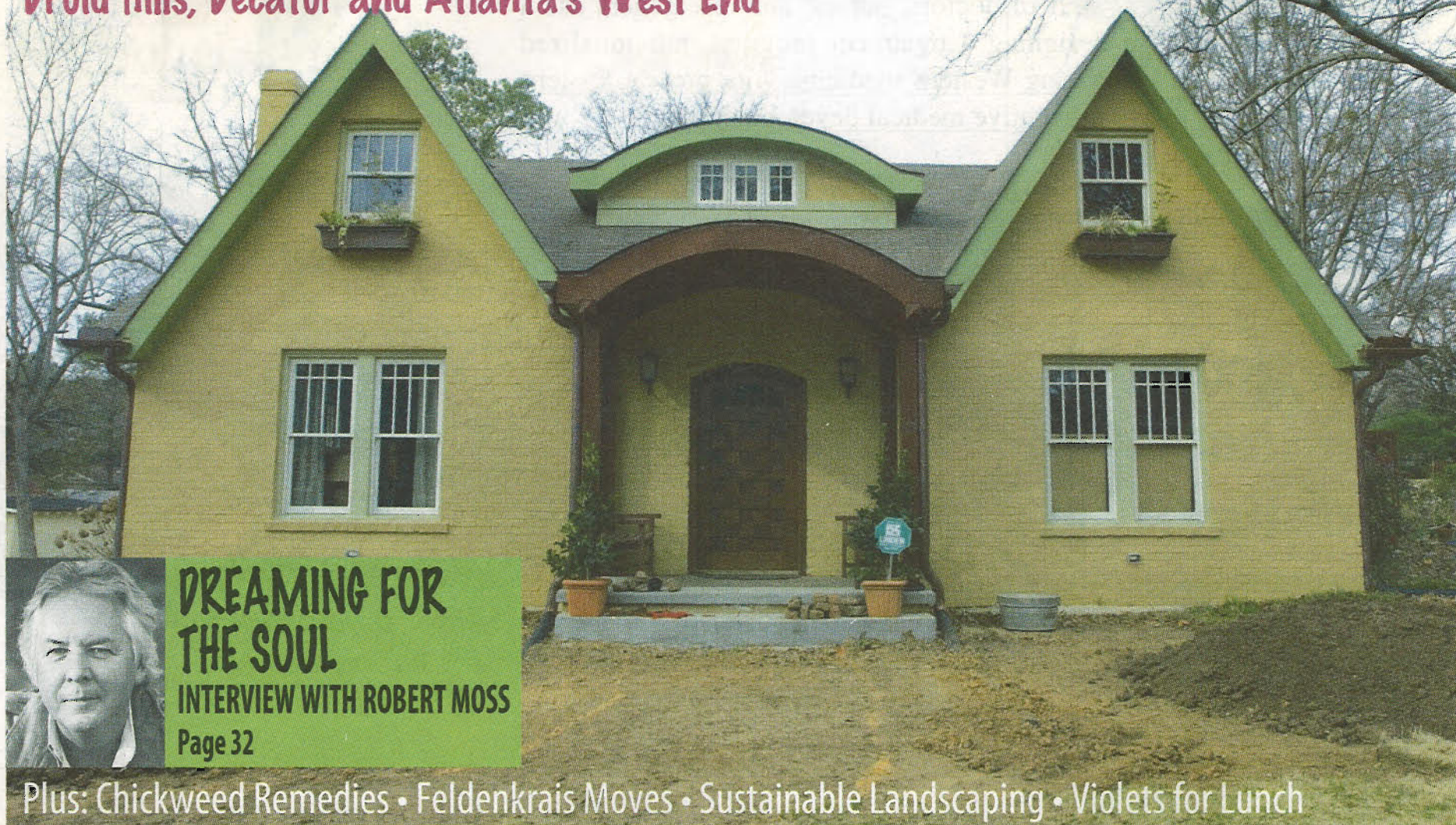
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ATLANTA SUSTAINABLE HOMES SHOWCASE GREEN RENOVATIONS IN Druid Hills, Decatur and Atlanta's West End



**DREAMING FOR
THE SOUL**
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SUSTAINABLE HOME SHOWCASE

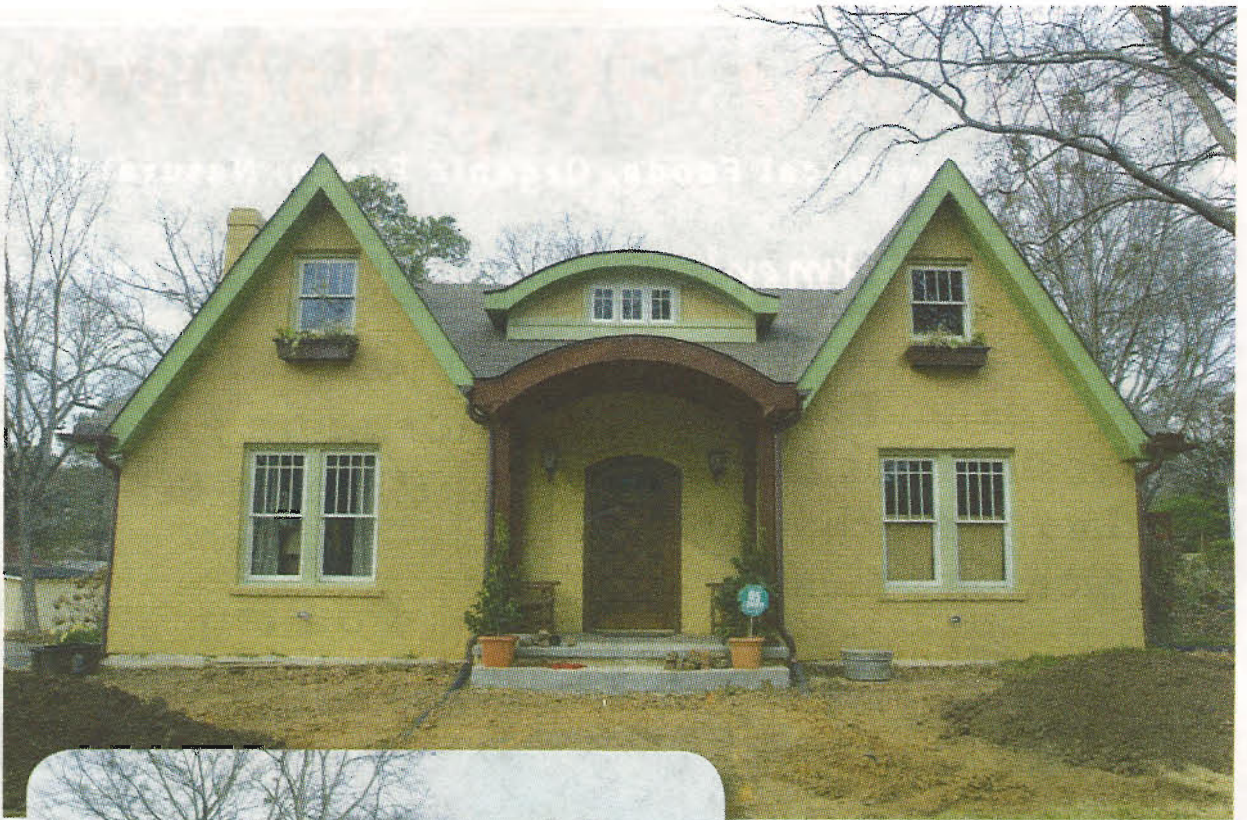
Dedicated in Decatur

The Ultimate Home Recycling Adventure

Architect: Peter H Hand Associates
Builder: Pinnacle Custom Builders, Inc.
Price Tag: \$306,442
Square Feet: 3,500
Construction Type: Wood framed with brick veneer

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence."
 —Calvin Coolidge

One of the primary ways to build sustainably is to renovate an existing structure rather than build a brand new one. Not only does this choice maximize the lifespan of the original house's materials, but it also keeps buildings on building lots rather than taking over more of our natural environment for human habitation. The owners and builder of this house held to this vision for the project. The house was in very poor condition prior to the renovation. During construction, the builder discovered that much of the original structure had been built using salvaged materials from a prior building, possibly a barn. The furnace appeared to be the original coal furnace, which had been converted to burn natural gas. Electrical wiring, while not original, was out of date and presented a significant fire hazard. The roof framing was not properly supported and was



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beginning to fail. The renovation completely reconfigured the interior layout of the house, while also providing new finishes and systems. The entire structure was gutted down to the raw framing, and all electrical, heating and air systems, and plumbing were removed. The entire second floor and the roof were removed and reframed.

Top green points

Credentials: EarthCraft certified

Efficiency: Icynene insulation, new, energy efficient heating and air systems, low flow plumbing fixtures, low e windows, energy efficient appliances

Low Toxicity: Natural materials used, rather than synthetic

Environmental: Renovated existing structure rather than new. Old heart pine framing recycled into new flooring material, recycled materials used where ever possible, sustainable materials used on exterior, minimized land disturbance during construction.

Every effort was made to recycle materials not used and to produce a house that is well insulated, energy efficient, and sustainable. Where possible, natural materials such as stone and granite and recycled materials such as reclaimed hardwood flooring were used. The entire exterior framing of the structure was foam insulated and sealed for weather-tightness. New, energy efficient heating and air systems were installed. All windows were replaced with insulated, low e-windows or sash kits. The

complete building envelope was insulated with high-efficiency icynene. This project's primary challenges concerned correcting problems with the framing of the structure. The builders knew they would be gutting the house down to the framing and replacing all the finishes. They had also planned on completely removing all of the old electrical wiring, all of the plumbing, and all of the old heating and air conditioning system. After exposing the framing, they discovered that the roof framing and the framing of the second floor were in poor condition and that the original work had not been done correctly and would need to be replaced. This forced the owners to make some decisions concerning design and expenses that they had not anticipated. Working inside the original brick exterior created limits on the building process that caused further problems and delays in the framing. Most of the building took place during a rainy spring, and the building crew felt like they spent as much time removing and replacing tarps as they did actually getting the work done. This was quite a project, but the homeowner never lost his vision and the house was eventually finished, keeping ideals intact.

Robert J. Soens, Jr. is with Pinnacle Custom Builders, Inc. They are an Earthcraft Builder and Renovator in Decatur Georgia. You can reach them at 404-373-7027.