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Cave-Like Home on Track to be New York's First Passive House

by **Brit Liggett**, 08/10/10

filed under: *Architecture, Sustainable Building, Zero energy*



Image courtesy DWA

Architect **Dennis Wedlick** is looking to the past to inspire the future of green building as he constructs an ultra-efficient cave-like home that's on track to be New York State's first **passive house**. **The Architects Newspaper** tells us that the home is currently under construction in Claverack, New York, and it will come complete with a concrete slab floor, high-density insulation and a heating expenditure 90% lower than the average home.



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Wedlick realized that caves feature super-efficient insulation because of their continuity of materials and the lack of places for air to escape. He translated this into house form by using larger slabs of insulation materials for the walls and floor, therefore minimizing the amount of air that can escape — this is contrasted with the relatively open and airy feeling in the home, created by large open spaces and large windows. This strategy is coupled that with an integrated

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air circulation system that keeps the interior climate fresh. Wedlick hopes that once it is finished his spec home will be certified by the Passive House Institute in the US, making it one of just a handful completed and certified in the United States.

"There are only about ten certified passive projects in the entire country," Wedlick told The Architect's Newspaper, "but something like 10,000 in Germany. That really tells you how far behind we are on sustainability." Building a passive house is less about advanced technology and more about smart building and construction techniques, and Wedlick hopes to help those smart moves seep into the mainstream building industry.

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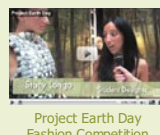
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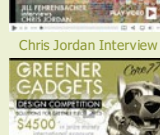
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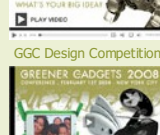
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The house has been dubbed the Hudson Passive Project, as it is being constructed in the Hudson Valley. A hundred and fifty people came out to hoist the frame of the house — just like an old time-y community would. The construction is funded by Bill Stratton Building Company, part of the research was funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and the Levy Partnership, and the land was provided by Sciam Development. Wedlick hopes that this spec house will convince people to build more homes that have a net positive impact on the grid, instead of a negative drain.

Via [The Architect's Newspaper](#)



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