

Designer Profile

HDA, Inc. is committed to making your home building journey an easy one. To assist in the process, we compiled questions to ask nationally renowned designers and architects who have designed homes featured in this magazine. This issue we feature our cover home designer, Bob Chatham, president of *Chatham Home Planning, Inc.*

Bob Chatham is a second generation home designer that has been in business for over 25 years. His architectural background is in coastal and historical homes and his homes have been featured in numerous books and magazines. He is best known for his Charleston Collection originally created for Charleston, South Carolina, but has now been built nationwide. Chatham has been a professional member of the American Institute of Building Design for over 20 years and is also a member of the National Association of Home Builders.



Bob Chatham

It is sprayed to the bottom of the roof decking between the rafters. Basically, you are “air-conditioning” your attic so you don’t have to seal up doors or light fixtures that go into the attic allowing the cool air to “leak” into the attic space. This type of insulation will also reduce the size of your heating and cooling units. Energy efficient doors and windows throughout are a large factor in energy efficiency. Putting dimmer switches on all lighting, but especially recessed lighting which can be a less efficient lighting source. You may also consider using LED or fluorescent lighting where possible. Water conservation – low flow fixtures, toilets, faucets, etc.. When shopping for appliances, ask for Energy Star® appliances. Using recycled materials such as antique flooring also known as “reclaimed flooring” from older buildings being torn down where the wood would have normally been discarded. Our home uses many other features such as a geothermal heating and cooling system which will provide you with a 30% tax credit of the installed cost of the system.

DA: Is it easy to convert a conventional home to a green home? Can this work with a stock plan?

BC: Absolutely, with our home what we were trying to show when designing/building our green home is that you can build a very energy efficient home that can look normal without costing a lot more per square foot. Depending on



Bob Chatham of Chatham Home Planning, Inc. designed this beautiful green home plan. To see more of this design, including photos and floor plans, see pages 20-22 and 96.

what features you choose, your costs can be as low as 6 - 7% more to build green/energy efficient than it would be to build without them. All of these items and more can be applied to any home design.

DA: With the downturn in the housing market over the past couple of years, is there anything you’ve noticed about current homebuyers and what is important to them? Anything different than before?

BC: Oddly enough even though it costs more to build green/energy efficient, the interest in it has grown. Part of this is because people think a lot of our economy problems stem from our energy cost and our dependency on foreign oil and/or other methods for providing energy in our homes. So if our homes use less energy now, people feel the long-term affect will be better. We can affect the amount of energy usage to the extent that the savings will offset the higher mortgage on the home. People are more cautious in their investments and they are evaluating their decisions more closely by being more conservative. They are looking more closely to where they are building and are evaluating the market conditions to make sure their investment is protected.

DA: What sort of trends besides green building have you noticed in the housing market?

BC: Fortified homes - there is a large part of the U.S. within coastal regions and there is a big trend to not only meet the codes but exceed the codes which is also known as fortified. Insurance companies are more reluctant to insure the homes in coastal areas but if the home is fortified they find that not only are they writing policies but that their insurance premiums are significantly less. (Fortified means that the home has been designed for winds 20 miles an hour more than code along with other safety requirements.)

DA: In your opinion and if you could only choose one, what would be the single most important option to make a home energy efficient/green?

BC: Perimeter insulation – typically homes now are built with more features that are energy efficient than in the past. So, if you are investing in energy efficiency the next one down the list in my opinion would be perimeter insulation which not only makes your home efficient, but quieter and more comfortable.