

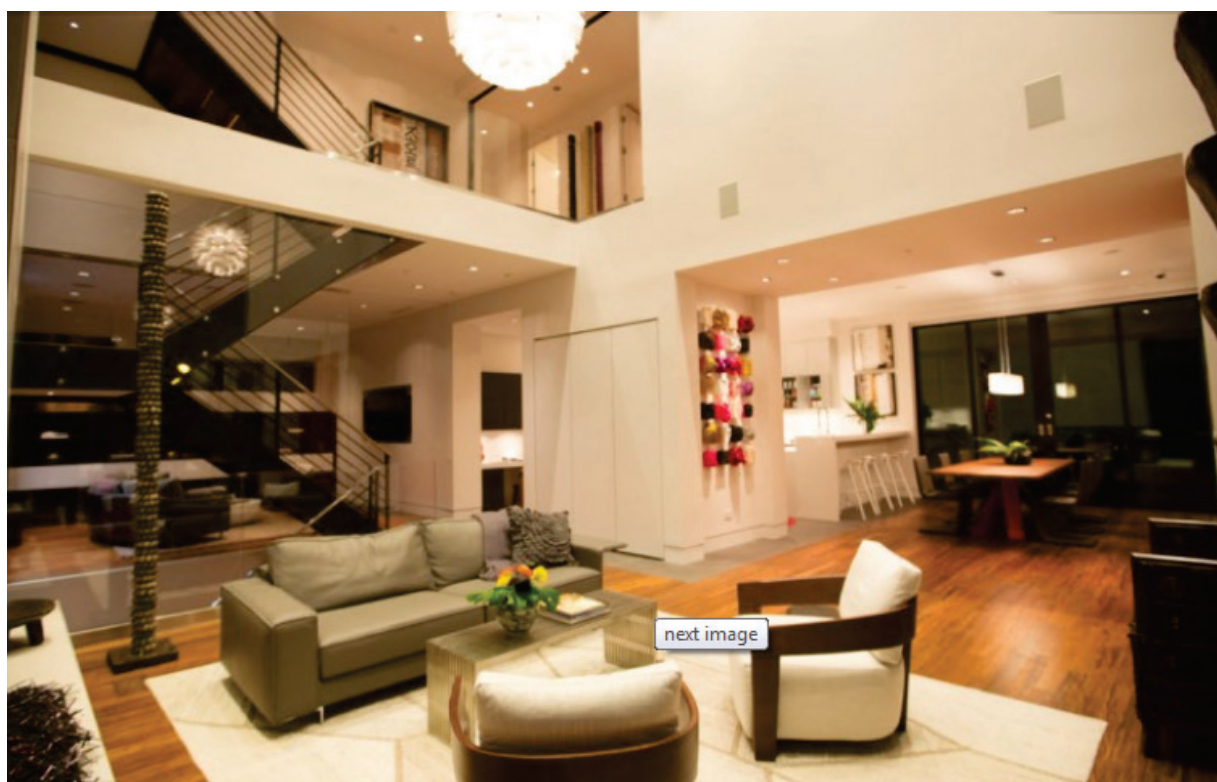


## Healthy Home Chicago: Inhabitat Gets a First Look Inside Amazing Green Chicago Home

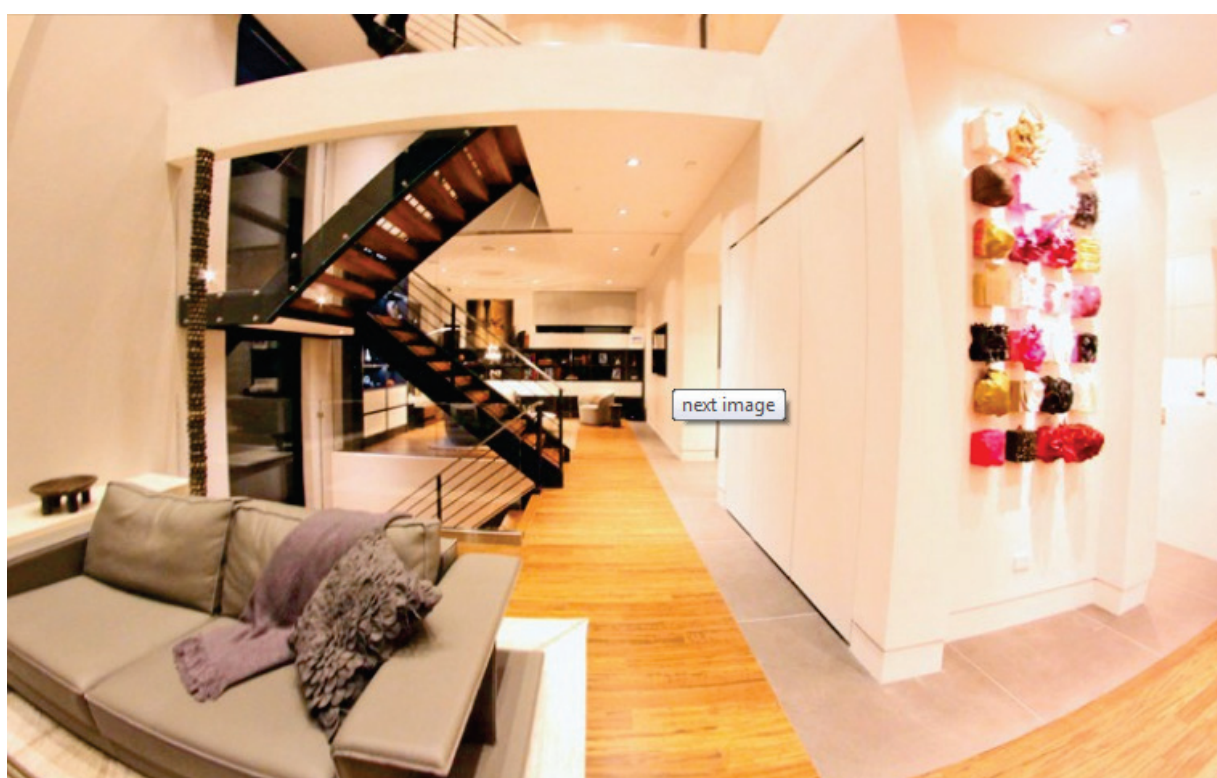
by Lea Stewart, 11/05/12



Last week Inhabitat was invited to tour this stunning home in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. The modern abode is home to a passionate family who wanted to fuse healthy living with expert green design. The home is built on a vacant lot where a CTA bus depot stood long ago, and the teams involved in designing and building this new home considered every detail against the principles of sustainable design, as well as the healthy living guidelines promoted by the non-profit organization Healthy Child Healthy World.



This masterpiece home began as a plea from a young couple fed up with not being able to find a healthy home where they could raise their daughter, and soon expected second baby. For those not familiar with design for HEALTHY living, this builds on green design by considering wellness, safety, and cleanliness. In search of a new home, Pam and Jan looked at over 140 homes and condos in the downtown area, but could not find one that had long-lasting materials, that was energy efficient, secure, or had the low maintenance requirements that they were seeking. For example, they commonly saw homes with dust collecting areas above kitchen cabinets, dirt trapped high pile carpeting, and low windows with casement openings that could endanger children if opened too much, and conversely, constrict air flow if not opened enough.



The couple's quest began by asking their developer to build them a healthy home. Bloomfield Development Company partnered with experts from Healthy Child Healthy World, GreenGuard, and Dwell Magazine, to create a team able to make the home not only a perfect living space for the family, but also one that would showcase the best in sustainable design, innovative technologies, green building materials, and healthful living.

The home was designed by architect Joe Trojanowski in collaboration with Susan Fredman Design Group, and a team of excellent contractors. Trojanowski said that his goal

while designing the home was to have it be beautiful, and to achieve a look that was modern, but that also felt warm. Upon entering the home through an over-sized red front door, you are immediately taken aback by the open floor plan and high ceilings — both which allow for the entire first floor to be illuminated with daylight. An open staircase winds down in front of the view, creating the strongest focal element in the home.



When I asked the architect and interior designers what their biggest challenge was, I heard repeatedly that finding vendors with products that follow green and healthy standards was an immense task. Trojanowski told me that asking "What's in it?" was always the first question when evaluating a product or material.

The team did amazing work finding quality green and healthy products and materials for the home. The exterior of the building is clad in dark brick and large cast stone panels. The insulation envelope of the house is high performing, with insulation that exceeds the standards set by the City of Chicago Green Homes Program Guidelines. The house is enclosed in a continuous insulation, including under the basement slab, which reduces the heating demand. It also includes mechanical connections for future solar thermal and solar photoelectric systems. Another unique feature of the exterior is the corner of the lot that was transformed into a raised terrace dining space with an outdoor fireplace.



Inside the home, 98% efficient heating provides for a comfortable space — meaning nearly all of the energy consumed is converted directly to heat, rather than wasted. The windows in the house are constructed of thermally broken aluminum frames, which prevent 'thermal bridging', or the direct transfer of heat through the window frame. The window glass is 1" thick insulated glass, manufactured by PPG, with a special 'Solarcool Grey' reflective coating that provides daytime privacy and further reduces the heat transfer.

The master bath is a long room complete with a double vanity, soaking tub, and a wet room shower. All water fixtures, most from Japanese company Toto, are low flow, and all of the tiles on the floors and walls are ceramic. The couple told me that they chose tile, FSC certified Teragren bamboo flooring, and recycled cork flooring throughout the house because these materials are green, but also because they are low maintenance. They were very interested in having a home that stayed clean and didn't have surfaces that trapped dirt and toxins.



The master bedroom has an amazing bed from Chicago Luxury Beds and also lots of natural light coming in through glass doors that lead to a private green roof space. The decking surfaces are made with composite wood decking, which is made from scrap wood and recycled products. The entire home is designed to maximize green space and is extensively planted, which reduces the stormwater load, and helps to reduce the 'heat island effect' of buildings in the city.

This home is meant to be an educational model about healthy living, so products that promote healthy lifestyles were displayed throughout along with information from Healthy Child Healthy World. Safe children's products such as teething toys from Natursutten, Zoe-B's "anti-plastic" child's toys, and OrganicKidz stainless bottles are displayed room built for the soon-to-be-born addition.

In other parts many other products were featured: eco-friendly laundry detergent from Ecos, natural body care products from Burt's Bees and Episencial, and healthy supplements from Nordic Naturals. Because the product placement completed the vision of the healthy and green lifestyle, it was not overwhelming advertising. Walking around the this home forces one to start doing an assessment of their own lifestyle!



The third floor of the home has folding glass walls on all sides that open to an amazing roof deck. The deck uses wood composite decking, and has thick sheet glass railings. Up here we find a private office and an entertaining kitchenette from Bentwood Kitchens and lounge. Above this area is a metal roof has a high solar reflective index (SRI) which reflects much of the sun's heat and helps to reduce the cooling load.

Perhaps our favorite room in the home is the Bulthaup kitchen. The soft finish on the metal veneered cabinet fronts was stunning. The kitchen was design with flat surfaces for easy cleaning, and no crevices to hide dirt. All of the appliances are Energy Star rated.

Victoria Di Iorio from Healthy Child Healthy World said, "We are going beyond the notion of what is sustainable to create a home that has health and wellness at the heart of our objectives. This project seeks to raise awareness on all the ways we can achieve a healthier environment — from cleaning supplies and food choices to how we construct and decorate our homes — so anyone can aspire to cleaner, greener, healthier living."



This home is the second built in the Chicago area in partnership with Healthy Child Healthy World. We hope to see even more homes built under the guiding principles of GREEN and HEALTHY!

Lead photo by Alan Michael Whitney, Courtesy of Healthy Home Chicago 2012

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