

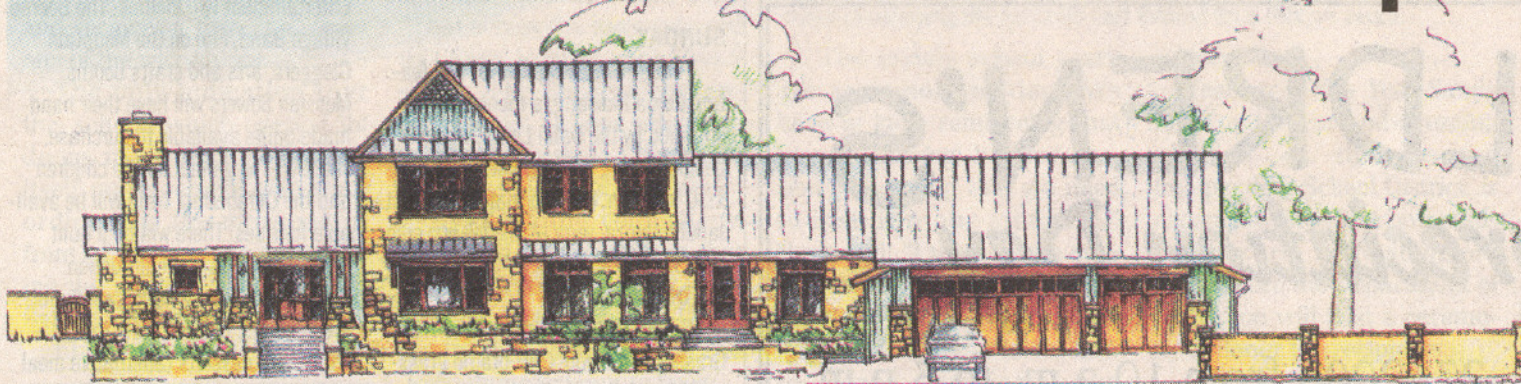
HILL COUNTRY View

BOERNE
BERGHEIM
LEON SPRINGS
THE DOMINION
FAIR OAKS RANCH

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

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Rooted in history Boerne Green House borrows from the past



Courtesy rendering

The Boerne Green House was designed by Ben Adam, Boerne architect.

By Linda Byrne
Editor

The Hill Country vernacular house being built in Tapatio Springs will look like others around it. But there will be a big difference on the day utility bills arrive. The electric bill for the 3,500-square-foot Boerne Green House is estimated to be a manageable \$100 for the month.

The house is the vision of local residents

Karen and Griz Adams and will showcase the latest in green building and energy conservation. All its materials and innovations will be on display for the public during a one-week open house at the completion of construction next summer.

Some of the home's features will be very familiar to Hill Country residents who have visited old homesteads that dot the Hill Country: water harvesting, gray water

reuse, a metal roof and native landscaping with fresh fruit, herbs and flowers. All these features of the Boerne Green House were incorporated into dwellings of bygone days.

But this is no homesteader's limestone cottage.

Indeed, those hardworking settlers would have loved features such as passive

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INSIDE

OUT AND
ABOUT



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Spurs fashion
show raises funds
for cancer
research*

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MOVIE



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solar hot water, geothermal heating and cooling, energy efficient insulation and high performance windows.

"Utilizing readily available technologies, we will be saving significant money and resources every month," said Griz Adams.

Boerne architect Ben Adam, AIA, designed the house. Its features include a foyer, large family room, kitchen, vaulted dining room, back porch with outdoor kitchen and a spacious master suite complete with an office on the first floor. There's a second office off the family room.

"Both homeowners office from home, which aids in reducing the overall carbon footprint from commuting," Karen notes.

Another feature not seen in conventional houses is a second, auxiliary front entrance to the house from the driveway.

"This will be the commonly used entrance as it has close proximity to the driveway for grocery unloading, kid and equipment unloading right to the mud hall, where equipment and backpacks can be taken off and then I can walk right into the kitchen for easy access," Karen said.

Anyone who entertains outdoors or has active children would love another of the house's features: a bathroom located directly off the patio.

"That is the dedicated outdoor restroom for visitors, mostly for folks (who will be) taking tours related to water harvesting and green building classes through the Cibolo Nature Center," Karen explained.

"One thing we learned from John Kight's experience when he teaches water harvesting classes is that folks

have to go through his house to use the restroom, so we decided to build one outdoors so it would be less obtrusive. It also will be good for children when they are outside playing."

The second floor has two bedrooms, a bath and a common area. To obtain more Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design points, the garage is detached from the main house. LEED points are awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council and rate a building's energy efficiency.

To effectively build the structure and encourage

before you break ground."

Crawford said Griz Adams salvaged the tree protection fencing from another worksite and it can be recycled and used again when this project is completed.

An opening has been left in the fencing and a picnic table has been placed in the shade of the large tree so construction workers have a pleasant place to take breaks.

Crawford said the charette fostered communication that will lead to cost savings as the home is built. For example, when the slab is poured, footings for the retaining wall can be done at the same time.

"It's been real rewarding to work with this wonderful team of people," she said.

According to Crawford, the only impervious areas will be the footprint of the house and garage to facilitate passive rainwater harvesting.

Karen Adams, a public relations consultant, has several blogs and a Web site dedicated to the project.

"I will post project milestones and updates via these electronic media," she said.

The Adams are working with the Cibolo Nature Center to conduct a Green

Building Workshop slated for Nov. 15 at the nature center. To learn more, visit www.cibolo.org.

"Our goal is to share best practices so that more and more folks will use some of these techniques," Karen said. "If we can make a small impact here in the Hill Country in terms of conserving resources, we feel like it is all worth it."

Karen Adams said the home would be featured on the U. S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Web site www.greenhomeguide.org as a case study with specific details about the home following construction.



Courtesy photo by Katherine Crawford

The work site of the Boerne Green House on Jackrabbit Circle has fencing to protect trees.

For more information:

Web site: www.boernegreenhouse.com

Boerne Green House blog:

http://blogs.mysanantonio.com/weblogs/Sustainable_Concept_House/

teamwork, a charette was held July 1 at the Cibolo Nature Center with the major participants.

Landscape architect Katherine Crawford, who participated in the charette, said anyone driving by the worksite would see some signs this is no construction area of the past, where property often was bulldozed to bare earth in preparation for building.

"We have put up tree protection around the trees, including what I call the granddaddy of them, a live oak with a trunk that's 42 inches in diameter," Crawford said. "That needs to be done