B&Q Eco House - About the project

August 2011

Background

B&Q have bought a house in Bishopstoke near Southampton to refurbish into an EcoHouse fit for the next century over the next 3 months. The finished home will run using as few resources as possible – but will also be stylish and comfortable, a One Planet Home®.
Our house is about 100 years old, has 3 bedrooms and is an end terrace in a suburb – an ordinary home. We are going to demonstrate how this home can be improved to achieve high levels of energy efficiency and use renewable energy. We are also going to incorporate features that will help to make our home more sustainable in other areas - water use and sustainable materials for example.
Sustainability experts from the charity BioRegional have been helping us to plan our project. Many of the improvements will be made using materials you can already buy from a B&Q store. We are also using the home as a test bed for new technologies – trying these out in a real home will help us decide whether these are ready for B&Q yet.

Why a 22nd Century Home?

Our home is 100 years old now and it has seen many upgrades over that period including a new heating system and moving the bathroom inside. These have made the home ready for the 21st century. Now we need to make the home ready for the next 100 years, to make it prepared for the 22nd Century. Predicting 100 years in the future is hard to do let alone 10 years, but, there are some things we can count on and are acting as the basis for our development.
One Planet Home is about living within our fair share of the earth's resources, achieving a better quality of life by using energy and water more efficiently, wasting less, recycling and reusing materials and making choices about improving our homes that are good for the planet.

Our home

There are about 26 million homes in the UK. Every year, about 100,000 new homes are built - and to a higher level of sustainability than previous homes as building regulations have set higher standards. But three quarters of our homes were built before 1975 - and by 2050, most of the homes we will be living in have already been built.* This means that refurbishing older homes to higher levels of sustainability can help to reduce carbon emissions than simply building new eco homes.
Our house is about 100 years old and is built of brick with a tiled roof. It is an end terrace with cavity walls. It was extended in the 1980's to add a bathroom to the back of the house on the ground floor and the house has been double glazed.

We have many opportunities to improve its energy performance. Our goal is to comply with the Passivhaus standard wherever possible and the BRE Sustainable Refurbishment Code.
We also want to make the home a better place to live by moving the bathroom upstairs, enlarging the kitchen, replacing the steep staircase and adding smart technology that will adapt to the requirements of the people living there.
We are enlisting the B&Q design team to make the home stylish using innovative materials.
We are aiming to keep our home's refurbishment's environmental impact as low as we can. If we can recycle or reuse anything in the home, we will do. We also intend to make use of Freecycle, a network to assist people in finding goods that other do not want for free. By choosing products for our home that are made from recycled materials, we will be helping to close the recycling loop.

*Source - Annual Energy Statement, DECC