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atHome

SUSTAINABLE & SMART

BUILDING A CUSTOM HOME IN BOULDER COUNTY



HOME & GARDEN

HOME STYLES
TO BRING HOME

OUTDOOR LIVING:
DECK & LANDSCAPE IDEAS

INSPIRATION EDITION FLOORING | GARDENING | HOME DECOR | LANDSCAPING | WINDOW COVERINGS

Sustainable & Smart

BUILDING YOUR GREEN DREAM HOME IN BOULDER COUNTY



▲ This LEED Platinum certified modern farmhouse is Rodwin Architecture and Skycastle Construction's first "regenerative home," producing more energy than it consumes.

BY BRITTANY ANAS
PHOTOS COURTESY OF
RODWIN ARCHITECTURE

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to create your own custom, green dream home? We went behind-the-scenes with Rodwin Architecture and Skycastle Construction, one of Boulder's most respected and experienced design/build teams to learn more about the process. These award-winning firms have completed dozens of beautiful homes in Boulder County over the last twenty years, including some of the greenest in the country.

"Our mission is to offer our clients truly sustainable homes without compromising beauty or functionality," said the firms' Founder Scott Rodwin, AIA, LEED AP.



► The integrated design-build team serving the Boulder County area is a leader in sustainable building, proving homes can reach the highest of green standards, without compromising beauty or functionality.

A testament: The firms have successfully completed multiple LEED Platinum homes (the highest green building certification offered by the US Green Building Council) including the "Farmhouse";

which also became the team's first "regenerative" home, meaning it produces more energy than it uses.

The beautiful home is filled with green features, including passive solar design, a ground



▲ The Broadway House is a 3,000 square foot, near-Net Zero Energy home with a signature floating roof that allows the owner to enjoy giant views of the Flatirons to the south.

source heat pump, a 10kW PV solar system, non-toxic interior finishes, Permaculture landscaping, rainwater harvesting, LED lighting and Beetle-kill pine and reclaimed wood. The 2,800 square-foot home also incorporates thoughtful, creative design touches that reflect the homeowner's lifestyle: broad sliding glass doors to facilitate indoor/outdoor living, built-in shoe cubbies under the stairs in the entryway, and a space-saving fold-down quilting table in the guest room.

“Creating a custom home can be one of the most satisfying and enduring expressions of who you are and how you want to live,” says Rodwin. “Most people never have the opportunity to live in a house that's tailored to their lives. We start every project by carefully listening to our client's goals – not just for their house, but for how



▲ Scott Rodwin and Brandon David work on an architectural plan.

they want to live in it.”

Some design firms only offer one style. Rodwin Architecture is best known for their warm modern designs, but when you look at the gorgeous portfolio of work on their website, you see a surprisingly wide variety of styles – Craftsmen,

Modern, Mountain and Farmhouse. The design team loves to innovate, and ultimately create homes that are a unique expression of their client's personalities and preferences. The homes become true living art.

The architects start by asking their clients to create a visual

collection of what they find beautiful using Houzz or Pinterest. Then the team asks questions like: ‘What sequence do you want to have when you enter your home? Where do you like to hang out? How do you want to cook?’ They merge that with what they learn from the site itself, the topography, the views, and the direction of the sun. The designers help you to understand and navigate the complex rules for building here.

The firm’s secret sauce is what comes next: Their design/build delivery system seamlessly integrates the design and construction process. Brandon David, Co-Owner of Skycastle, holds an Environmental Design degree from CU and leads the construction process. “We work from a holistic approach. The structure, mechanical systems, building envelope, finishes and even landscape are all one complete design. We integrate those design ideas with a builder’s perspective right from the start. That helps to control and predict costs, and insures that our client’s original vision and intention is carried through to the final details,” said David.

We asked Rodwin and David if there are any local design trends other than green building. They noted three:

“Modern architecture,” said Rodwin. Scott graduated in 1991 from Cornell University, known as being one of the country’s foremost modern architecture schools. “What we look for is the balance point between the clean, bold and simple lines of modernism, and the warmth and beauty of nature.”

Brandon offered the next: “Many of our clients are looking to create their ultimate dream home and their last house. They want to be able to gracefully age-in-place, so



▲ This beautiful 3800 sf contemporary Colorado mountain home resides on one of Gold Hill’s original homesteads. The passive solar house maximizes the sweeping views of the Switzerland Trail and Indian Peaks mountain range.



▲ Landing dramatically in the great room, a stone fireplace anchors the space at the Treehouse Home, while a wall of glass opens to the soaring covered deck, whose structure was designed to minimize any obstructions to the view.

we incorporate features like a “mini-master” bedroom on the main floor that serves for now as a guest room suite; roll-in showers; three foot wide doors, and extra blocking in the walls for future grab-bars.

“Right-sizing,” said Rodwin. The firm is part of the “Not so big house” movement and looks to help its clients create a home that fits them (and their budget) just right. “Bigger isn’t always better. The best home is simply one that enhances the quality of your life.”

Want to learn more about building a custom green home?

The Rodwin Architecture team will conduct a free site visit and project feasibility analysis for you. They’ll help you to understand the budget, timeline and the local rules so you can decide if creating a new custom home is the right move for you. ■

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