




L.A. at Home

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ReUse Haus, a miniature dwelling made with used materials, on display at AltBuild

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When it comes to green building, energy efficiency gets most of the attention. If reused building materials are discussed, it's usually in context of *de*-construction, not *re*-construction using materials from demolished or remodeled homes.

The ReUse Haus on display at the [AltBuild Expo](#) running through Saturday in Santa Monica focuses on the reconstruction. The mini house, left, is meant to show that a recycled home "doesn't have to look like a tree house," said Ted

Reiff, co-founder of the Oakland-based deconstruction firm the Reuse People.

The Reuse People provided most of the materials for the 8-by-12-foot space, including the lumber, doors, windows and decking. "Everything is reused from buildings we ourselves have taken apart," Reiff said, noting the exceptions of paint, drywall, nails and corrugated metal.

Reiff said his firm had deconstructed more than 1,000 buildings over the last 16 years. "If all we do is deconstruction, all we'll have is an above-ground landfill," he said. "People have to start using this stuff. We just thought it would be best to show people how easy and attractive it is."

Reiff coordinated with Wally Geer, a Ventura architect certified in the U.S. Green Building Council's [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design](#) program, to design the ReUse Haus. Long Beach contractor Wes Harding built it. Saturday morning, the three will conduct a panel at AltBuild titled "Remodeling With Reused Materials."

"Building with reused materials is the tail that wags the design dog. It's a reverse process from the way one ordinarily approaches design," said Geer, who sourced his materials from the Oakland and Pacoima warehouses where the Reuse People sells deconstructed materials to the public.

"Usually, designing a project starts with a clean sheet of paper and the architect makes it happen with new materials according to the architect's vision," Geer said. Designing with reused materials is "sort of like a used building material buffet. What's there is there, and you have to pick and choose from it and put a meal together. You pick what you want and design from what you've got."

-- Susan Carpenter