

Home Recycling

Diane Kepley:

To some, this would be a dream house; to others, it's a dump. In the real estate industry, homes like this are known as teardowns. The new owners of this house love the location but hated the dated style of the eight-thousand-square-foot dwelling. Dealing with the removal of the house has typically been a job for a demolition team. But with Americans growing ever more conscious of the environment, a new cottage industry has popped up.

Gene Metzger:

If we don't come here, or somebody like us, this house just gets torn down, and everything gets thrown away and taken to the landfills.

Diane Kepley:

The non-profit Second Chance organization specializes in finding new uses for old materials from buildings facing the wrecking ball.

Carl Jefferson:

You know how they say that one man's junk is another man's treasure, so if-if you don't have to waste it, and it can be used and whatnot. And-and that's what Second Chance does.

Diane Kepley:

Built less than twenty years ago, this home is loaded with materials that can be reused rather than trashed. After removing the appliances, plumbing, and wiring, workers will get down to the floorboards, in this case planks that were originally part of an historic building.

Mark Foster:

And you see, uh, here a wear layer, which is the top layer that you walk on. It's very thick and almost the original size. So this floor likely didn't get sanded a lot of times. You can see a great wear layer here. It's oak; it's solid. It, uh, it would be good for another three or four hundred years.

Diane Kepley:

Recycling homes is a win-win situation for everyone involved. The Environmental Protection Agency says reuse spares raw materials and reduces costs for builders and suppliers. And tax breaks are available for homeowners.

Kevin Morrow:

Frankly, salvaging is a-is an important part of green building. And green building as a whole is growing in popularity. So, by association, yes, this is something that we're seeing a lot of interest in and in an increasing amount of interest in among home builders.

Diane Kepley:

So, if the building salvage industry keeps gathering steam, more material may find its way into people's homes instead of clogging landfills.

Diane Kepley:

Diane Kepley, The Associated Press.

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