

Green rooms



Eco-chic home goes for the gold in Harlem

By JENNIFER GOULD KEIL

ONE of the greenest houses in the city can be found in an unlikely place. It isn't new construction; it's a 1910 brownstone on West 122nd Street that already has silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, which makes it the most eco-friendly home in Harlem.

Rosemary Ellis, editor of Good Housekeeping magazine — which renovated the home and is itself based in the LEED-certified Hearst Tower on West 57th Street — hopes the four-story brownstone will receive gold LEED status in a few weeks. (LEED points are awarded for various environmentally friendly features.) That, Ellis says, would make the structure the greenest house in town.

This is the glossy mag's third eco-chic home and "our most am-

bitious project yet," says Ellis, who hired interior designer Robin Wilson to transform the 4,600-square-foot brownstone.

The beleaguered home had started out as just a shell with no back wall, but "it's now quite beautiful and incredibly efficient . . . and environmentally friendly," Ellis says.

The whole project took more than a year to complete, including looking for the right building and getting a permit to renovate. Eco-friendly items such as low-flow plumbing, skylights with solar panels, tankless water heaters, no-VOC (volatile organic compound) paint and recycled hardwood flooring were incorporated into the home. But some practices were so new, it took a few tries to get them right.

For example, shredded blue jeans were used for insulation, but unlike regular insulation, denim needs air around it to breathe — so it had to be ripped out and put in again. And a contractor had to build from scratch a system to catch rainwater from the roof to be used for processes such as garden irrigation. The contractor had seen something similar in Australia, but there was nothing like it on the market to work with American appliances.

LEED THE WAY: This brownstone on West 122nd Street has been remade into a green oasis with features including recycled wood, environmentally friendly paint and insulation that was created from shredded blue jeans.

Wilson, who also worked on Esquire magazine's model apartment at 111 Central Park North. "It's classic with a modern touch."

Wilson's favorite design details include vintage pieces and a surfboard transformed into a spill-proof table for kids.

And while the home is definitely child-friendly — on one level are two bedrooms, two baths and space for playing and studying — it has plenty of room for grown-ups, too. Like a full-floor master suite with a 200-square-foot terrace, his-and-hers walk-in closets and a huge bathroom with a soaking tub.

The parlor floor has an open kitchen and a living area, with French doors leading to a lush backyard. (There's also a front yard, for a combined 760 square feet of

outdoor space.) The garden uses ungrouted stone, which allows water to pass directly through and be absorbed in the ground. There's no grass, which means less water use.

Gad Demy, of Mikka Develop-

ment, and Michael Kadosh, of Mick Enterprises, closed on the home this past February for \$1.4 million.

With the renovations complete, they plan to put it on the market for a whopping \$4.6 million.

"Michael and I bought this brownstone because Harlem is a re-emerging and vibrant neighborhood where people want to live," Demy says. "People also want to live a healthy, green lifestyle, and this renovation highlights the amazing ways homeowners can save energy, save water and maximize efficiency."

"I'm most proud of how thoroughly efficient and healthy [the home] is," says Ellis, who adds that many products claim to be green but aren't.

Inside, the furniture is a mix of vintage, antique and modern — including pieces from Crate & Barrel's new affordable green line — while the linens are all organic.

"I'd describe the look as eco-friendly-can-be-beautiful," says