



Photo by Kris Kann

Highlights:

- Japanese Old School with a Sustainable Edge
- Website updates include Rebates and Heritage
- Artichoke Dip tips *from Lindsay's Kitchen*

Winter Green: Eco-treatment for 5241 Koksilah Road



Restoration efforts at McLay House include hand-stripping and repainting to period colours, concrete and rebar underpinnings to pillars and porch (plus recapping and re-pointing of masonry throughout), restoration of fir floors, re-shellacking of wainscoting and built-ins, and rebuild of leaded glass windows.



As the sustainable living saga of Urban Edge Properties continues, we see the heritage house on site (believed to be the work of Robert McLay Jr.) receive some long-awaited love and attention.



Exterior repairs—as always, attempting to salvage and retain as much of the original fabric as possible, whenever possible—were followed this fall by a gentle reconditioning of the wood features inside the home. This included the careful treatment of premium grade fir floors and 1x24 and 1x18-inch wainscoting (cleaned and re-shellacked by finishing carpenter Michael Beckett).



Interesting details of ‘McLay House’ include the formidable stone fireplace, with its mantel of 4-inch thick granite, the unusual staircase design, and the upper floor laundry chute.

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Efficiency Fix—Low-flow is the way to go

Water-conserving toilets, gleaming new subway tile, and ultra-modern glass shower enclosures have married contemporary comfort and convenience to vintage charm at UEP’s ‘McLay House’. If these attractive bathroom fixtures are a natural fit in a century-old home, they’re an easy match to interiors from more recent decades. Water efficiency is essential and timeless, in our view, and this is an easy place to start. Some low-flow toilets (popularized in Japan and reintroduced to the west from there) come with a spigot and basin built into the top of the tank, allowing users to wash their hands in clean water destined for the next flush.

'Winter Green' continued ...

To the north, east, and south ends of the property are situated a diverse mix of rental accommodations and commercial-use spaces. These, too, have seen the benefit of recent TLC at the hands of the David Coulson Design crew. Unit E, at the south-east corner near our Boal Road entrance, was completely remodeled in the winter of 2008 to include recycled cabinetry and a newly designed bathroom and laundry.

The central Annex building, housing the DCD workshop and storage rooms, as well as rental apartments for 7 tenants, has been enhanced with the addition of a reclaimed tile roof leading out to the courtyard facing McLay House, and the rebuild of one living space (pictured bottom right) now home to our newest tenant. The unused storage space east of that new apartment has been substantially renovated and prepared for use as three additional one-bedroom suites. Improvements to existing apartments within the same building—already inhabited—have included new flooring, bathroom upgrades, new windows and doors accessible to exterior green space.

It is worth mentioning here that the community garden had another successful harvest this year and has been joined by a second vegetable and herb garden directly behind the Unit E cabin. Our rich river-silt UEP soil yielded a massive crop of squash, carrots, corn, green beans, spinach and other goodies that was so abundant we started sending carpenters home with care packages.

With positive input from our community, we're hoping to see still more affordable housing creation on site in 2011, following the adage that we can take something old and make it new again.



Vintage clay tiles, manufactured in France, were salvaged from Duncan's now-demolished Stonehaven and re-used in this hacienda-style portico for a ground-floor rental.



Unit J, completed by November 1st, exemplifies recycling and design practices at UEP by providing an attractive and comfortable interior for an affordable price (\$600+util) - while using recycled cabinetry, appliances, trim materials and doors.

www.davidcoulsondesign.com updates—Since our new site launch in September, we've added several features to our *home away from home* online: 'Cliffside Maple Bay' in the Recent Projects Gallery, 'The Green Door' in Community Initiatives (an example of live/work integrated community), colour pdf files from the TC news archives, the pdf version of our own newsletter, and a Rebates and Promotions page that outlines energy efficiency upgrade incentives still on offer from our government.



Left to right: The Green Door heritage home and live/work site in Downtown Duncan, front door and heritage designation plaque for same, view of ocean-facing deck and entry at Cliffside Maple Bay.

Design. Period. Japanese Old School With a Sustainable Edge

The predominant use of wood as a building material in Japan goes back centuries, and the world's oldest standing wood structure today is Horyuji Temple—outside of the eighth-century capital, Nara. Japan's so-called “culture of wood” is due, in part, to that country's abundant rainfall and distinct seasonal cycle, not unlike our own west coast home.

According to Shintoism, trees contain *kami* (spiritual essence) and must be treated with respect. One way to show such veneration is to use the harvested wood expertly and with great care—to create something beautiful and enduring.

Dedicated, thoughtful use of building materials can be a means of achieving *mono no aware* (the “ah-ness of things”). A balanced handling of line,



Photo by Gary Mckinstry

colour, and texture may also strive towards the Japanese concept of *wabi sabi* (difficult to translate, but associated with descriptive terms like “rustic”, “unassuming”, and “mellowed by age”).

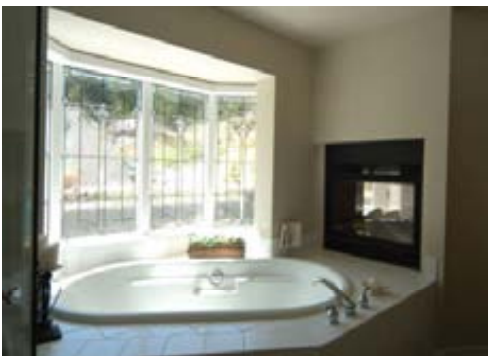
The David Coulson Design studio, pictured left, embodies several concepts borrowed from Japanese architectural tradition—namely, the use of dovetailed post and beam joinery, the wide overhangs to shield the structure from those abundant Island rains,

and the use of transparent walls to invite the outside (garden, forest, and natural light source) in. This sustainable structure also includes recycled glass and concrete floors with radiant heating, American Clay plaster walls that filter the air, and a sod roof (still under construction) that is the first of its kind in Cowichan.

Designer Q. & A. with David Coulson Your Bathroom—Merely Functional or Sanctuary of Light and Warmth?

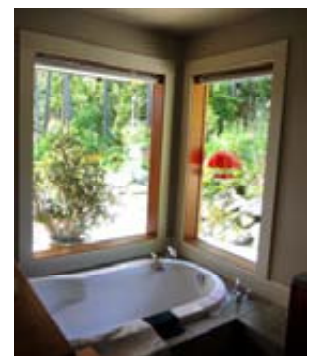
In your opinion, what constitutes a bathroom “must have” today?

The right light. Not only fixtures, but views. Natural light—if possible—feeding the space. Also, you need surfaces that can be used, enjoyed for their aesthetics, and that will last you a lifetime. That means tile. Stone, glass, or ceramic-tiled splash areas—all of which can be very exciting to work with.



And what would you characterize as luxurious, but worth the investment?

In-floor radiant heat lines. They are in great demand, and for good reason. It's an energy efficient choice and a very easy one to live with. And, if you can, a door direct to your garden or patio for that after-spa moment of relaxation.



from Lindsay's Kitchen: Cozy Artichoke Dip

This comforting snack or appetizer dish is easy to prepare and sure to impress. Try serving with crunchy canapé crackers or one of the Cowichan Valley's delicious locally-made breads.

Phone: 250-746-5372
 Fax: 250-746-5372
 coulsondesign@shaw.ca
 www.davidcoulsondesign.com

To receive the next quarterly issue of *The Source* by email, please send your e-address to:
 erin.coulson@shaw.ca



TO HAVE:

- 1 cup cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup mayo
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- sm jar artichoke hearts
- salt and pepper
- cayenne pepper (can also use hot paprika)

TO DO:

1. pre-heat oven to 350 F
2. blend cream cheese, sour cream, and mayo until well mixed
3. chop artichoke hearts into small pieces and add to mixture
4. add garlic and salt + pepper, to taste
5. spoon mixture into small ovenproof dish; sprinkle cayenne across the top
6. bake uncovered 20-25 min until golden and bubbling

*Notes: use artichokes marinated in oil, stored in a glass jar. The canned version does not yield the same flavour, and are often not as tender.

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Seed of Truth: Slow it Down with a Swale and Berm Solution

Our Pacific NW region is a modified Mediterranean climate—one with dry summers and very wet winters. Swales, berms, and rain gardens can be used in creative combination to collect water, redirect it, slow it down, and allow it to infiltrate into the soil.

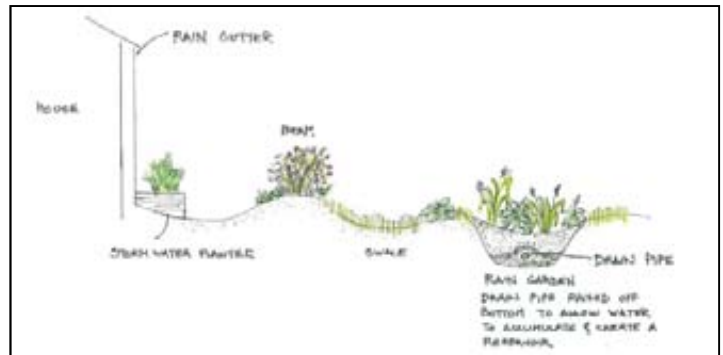
Swales are shallow, broad ditches designed to absorb excess water. The idea is to move water slowly along a gentle incline, keeping the rain on site as long as possible—so that it can soak into the ground naturally.

A berm is a raised mound—ideally constructed of the excavated soil dug from the newly-created swale—that intercepts and absorbs water running down a slope or over the lip of the swale.

Swales are typically planted with grasses and berms with a selection of perennials. These can serve as an attractive landscape feature, as well as a cost-effective and practical water-management system.

Rain gardens are small-scale artificial wetlands for urban environments, often with a greater variety of moisture-loving plantings woven into their design.

Utilizing these methods effectively can reduce the amount of storm water entering creeks and ditches by as much as 98%. A gift to our tenants, neighbours, urban community, and to Mother Nature.



Berm and swale concept design for UEP site.

Sketch by Ulla Coulson