

SMEEKENS RESIDENTIAL ECOROOF
2520 NE 7th Avenue, Portland, OR 97212

Inspiration

Installing an ecoroof was prompted by necessity and the outcome of “dreaming big”! I’m one to take on bold, new things and not look back, so I decided – along with my partner – to take this endeavor on.

We bought this house (where the ecoroof was installed) in February 2010 and it came complete with major roof leaks and damage that had resulted over the years that it had remained unoccupied prior to our finding and falling in love with it. We knew from the get-go that the roof needed replacing, which was a flat membrane roof that had once been “top of the line” but had not been maintained and had pretty much disintegrated.

When we investigated the options for replacing our roof, we discovered that we’d really like to install an ecoroof. Figuring out the specifics of the project, such as who to have do it and how in the heck to pay for it, took us a couple of years to work through. We wanted an ecoroof for several reasons, not the least of which was the decreased stormwater runoff and the sustainability of this type of roof. Besides the obvious ecological reasons, we understand that ecoroofs that are well maintained can last four times as long as a standard flat roof, and that’s pretty desirable to us.

When we learned that the City of Portland had a program that would help us pay for the ecoroof portion of the project, and we applied and received approval for these funds, there was no turning back for us!

Lessons Learned

While we are thoroughly pleased with the end result, it was not a quick or painless process for us.

Our home was built in 1922 and is made of brick. In order to support the weight of an ecoroof, we had to completely seismically retrofit the house. This aspect of the project was not included in any part of the City’s ecoroof program and the cost was about 10 times that of the actual ecoroof. The process of retrofitting the house was obviously extensive and, although we feel really grateful to have worked with Dan Mannng and his crew, because they were delightful to work with and through this process, the construction “took over” much of the summer! Ours was a constant shuffle of furniture and belongings to make space for the construction, as it made it’s way through the entire house (including the attic and basement!).

We didn't realistically anticipate the amount of time and energy this construction was going to take though, again, we want to iterate that we feel that Dan and his crew made this process as smooth and easy as was possible. It was just a huge project!

By the time we got to installing the actual ecoroof, in September, everything went brilliantly and we are very pleased to have completed it before the rains set in.

How we feel about the completed project

We LOVE the ecoroof! A couple of unexpected benefits of the roof are that the house is considerably better insulated and quieter. We discovered, during construction, that there was NO insulation in the attic. Between having approximately 14 inches of soil and materials covering the new ecoroof (which was previously black and generated heat in the summer) and adding insulation during the process, we have been thrilled to discover the difference this makes in the temperature and comfort of our home.

We're located right on NE 7th Avenue, which is a busy thoroughfare. The house feels a bit like a "cave", in that the noise level has been substantially reduced from the ecoroof, This is a wonderful thing in terms of the decrease of street noise that we now hear in the house, as well as how "solid" the place feels overall.

While it all went really well, considering the size of the project overall, we are grateful to have it completed and look forward to only having to maintain our ecoroof, rather than replacing an alternative roof, in our lifetime.

Finally, we planted a variety of sedum on the roof and are keen to see these grow and prosper. With Dan's input, we're looking forward to having a carpet of multicolor plants on the roof in the future, so look us up on Google Maps in a year or two!

Thank you, City of Portland, for helping us make this dream a reality!!!



