

# Environmental group moves to green home

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## Historic house gets 14-month makeover

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The staff of Upstate Forever works throughout the Upstate protecting special places and promoting common-sense growth. So it only makes sense that its headquarters reflect the green nature of its mission.

After 14 months of hard work, Upstate Forever now finds itself housed in a historic home that is a modern marvel. Built in 1916 as a family home in what is now the Pettigru Historic District, the house was vacant for 20 years before undergoing a 14-month "green renovation project," said Brad Wyche, Upstate Forever's executive director.

"Not everyone is going to build new construction," Wyche said about the easiest way to have a green structure, "so a big missing piece is the green renovation of existing buildings."

The former home was largely gutted to remove asbestos and to repair termite, fire and water damage.

"We were faithful to the original structure," Wyche said. "And we did practical things anyone can do."



Photos by GEORGE GARDNER / Staff

Upstate Forever has remodeled this house in the Pettigru Historic District. One of the environmental features built into the house is a "living roof," right.

The home was converted into offices for the Upstate Forever staff using sustainable, recyclable and low-energy products.

Landscaping is all native species irrigated by sophisticated rain barrels. The roof is covered partially with 50-year, yellow pine shakes, and also with a "living roof" — seedlings that will grow to form a natural garden.

Part of the renovation was retrofitting and adding windows to use as much available light as



### TAKE A LOOK

■ The public is invited to tour Upstate Forever's new headquarters at 507 Pettigru St., in downtown Greenville. Staff members and architects for the project will be on hand from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday to explain the renovation process and describe the building's green features. To RSVP for a tour, call: 864-250-0500, ext. 21.

possible, and also creating "sunlight tunnels" to channel light into the middle of the house.

Floor coverings range from recycled textile mill floors, reclaimed shipping pallets, recycled glass tiles, and "Marboleum," a faux linoleum made of hemp, linseed and other sustainable materials.

Solar panels provide 16 percent of the office's energy use, and energy-efficient insulation cuts heat bills by up to 50 percent.

"They did say we could do more solar if we cut the trees down," Wyche said. "But we weren't going to do that."

Instead, Wyche and the staff moved into a modern building Oct. 1 that's housed in a historic shell that blends seamlessly with other buildings on the street.

"It feels good here," Wyche said, looking around the naturally lit conference room. "Light pours in everywhere. We liked our old space, but this is terrific."