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**The Alexander Group, Inc.**  
DESIGN AND RENOVATION

5020 Nicholson Court, Suite #200A  
Kensington, MD 20895



*Excellence in architectural craftsmanship and remodeling*

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Great design, thoughtful execution,  
total integrity for more than 30 years!

Call us for your:

- *dream kitchen*
- *luxurious bathroom*
- *spacious, elegant addition*
- *energy efficient, high performance green solutions*



**BEFORE**

## 1960s rambler transformed into a healthy, green, accessible home

A single mom of a 12-year-old paraplegic son searched for five years before she found a contractor who understood what she needed in a home: a healthy, wheelchair accessible, green home that was self-sufficient in case of power failures.

Frustrated during that five year search for a contractor, the homeowner considered moving, but all homes she viewed still needed extensive remodeling to meet her son's requirements. Finally, realizing that she'd have to give up her views of open spaces at the rear of her home if she had to move, she decided to redouble her efforts to find a contractor experienced in universal design and healthy, green homes.

Her attorney recommended that she meet with Alex Dean, of The Alexander Group. Alex's

team saw this project as a perfect match for a program introduced by the U.S. Green Building Council, a non-profit organization that advocates sustainable building practices: Leader in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). Alex and the project team all attended the premier workshop in 2008.

In the discovery and planning stages, Alex suggested many healthy home and sustainable building ideas that were welcome news to the homeowner.

Already experienced in universal design, which strives to be a broad-spectrum solution that produces buildings, products and environments that are usable and effective for everyone, not just people with disabilities, The Alexander Group embraced this project enthusiastically:

5020 Nicholson Court, Suite 200A, Kensington, MD 20895 301-230-3040 [AlexanderGroup.net](http://AlexanderGroup.net)

## Eco-friendly landscape design

An eco-friendly landscape design is part plant selection and part water management. Plants should be chosen carefully. Though many plants add visual appeal to a yard or garden, it is important not to introduce an invasive species, which can have an adverse effect on other plants. (Kudzu is an example of an invasive species let loose on American soil by Civilian Conservation Corps volunteers in the 1930s in the Southwest in an attempt to control erosion, which continues to decimate native plants along highways.) After doing your research, select and purchase your plants from a reputable nursery or through a professional landscape design build firm.

In order to maintain an attractive landscape, water is essential. Rain and run-off water capture systems are growing in popularity, especially in drought vulnerable areas. Storm water management is important as well.



In the home featured in this newsletter, it wasn't the lack of water that was the problem. When excavating the ground for the addition, the water table was reached. Sump pumps were installed to manage the underground water during construction and as part of the drainage solution. Two rain gardens were created to collect the excess and increase on-site drainage. The garden has a well-designed earthen barrier and is populated with indigenous plants. The landscape was graded so the run-off is directed to the garden and to minimize runoff onto the street and neighbors' yards.

To learn more about eco-friendly landscape design, visit [www.AlexanderGroup.net](http://www.AlexanderGroup.net) for a list of informative links.



"We saw this as the perfect opportunity to integrate barrier-free access with LEED guidelines," Alex said. "LEED homes are designed and built to be energy and resource efficient, healthy homes."

The original ground level was stripped of all but two walls, which removed the barriers of narrow hallways and doorways. The new upper level and basement level are accessible by an elevator. The bathroom makes caring for the homeowner's son easier with a "roll-in" shower and special bathtub. In the event of a power failure, a generator keeps heating, cooling and cooking functions maintained.

The exterior is a Mediterranean style with stucco and acrylic coating and classic style terra cotta concrete roof tiles, quite a dramatic change from the original. The homeowner's son has respiratory problems so indoor air quality was addressed by installing two high-efficiency heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems, including an ERV system for bringing in fresh air, and ultraviolet light filters to kill bacteria, and high efficiency particulate filtration.

The Washington Post featured this home recently; a link to the article and more photos are online at [www.AlexanderGroup.net](http://www.AlexanderGroup.net).

## Certifications for building green

Among several "green" educational programs available to builders and remodelers, the one that homeowners can look to for third party oversight is the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) "Leader in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED) certification. The program offers four levels of certification: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum, each defined by progressively stricter standards and assigned points, relative to the size of the home. Of the 697 residential units registered in the greater Washington DC area, only one has been certified LEED. The home referenced in this newsletter is the first Gold certified home in this area.



USGBC notes: "LEED certification verifies that the home is designed to meet the highest criteria and operates exactly the way it is supposed to—with energy efficiency and health in mind, and the potential to save residents money on energy and water bills while reducing carbon footprints and environmental impact."

In order to qualify for LEED for Homes certification, The Alexander Group registered the project before construction began, and hired a third party—a technical consultant that acts as a provider for LEED for Homes, to assist with verification and documentation. The project is critiqued and reviewed to determine a preliminary certification level. During construction, TAG provided proof of construction methods and materials. The structure is inspected, tested and rated for home energy consumption. Once the project is completed, a final inspection is conducted by the third party, who assigns points and submits a detailed list to the USGBC for final review.

In addition to the prestigious LEED certification, Alex Dean has also completed educational courses and has been certified by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) as a Green Certified Professional (GCP), and has tested for certification from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Green Certified Professional (GCP) — a rare combination of qualifications. Alex Dean and Brian Stone both hold the LEED AP Homes credentials.



President  
Alex Dean,  
CR, CGR, GCP  
LEED AP Homes

Construction Mgr.  
Steve Mayberry

Design Consultant  
Brian Stone  
LEED AP Homes

Carpenter  
Joe Norville

Office Manager  
Angie Ahmed

**Members of:**  
NARI DC Chapter

Montgomery Co.  
Builders Association

Better Business Bureau

**Recent Awards:**  
2009 Finalist, NAHB  
Green Home Award  
Program - Green  
Remodeling Project

2008 Master Design  
Gold Award

2007 NARI  
CoTY Awards (2)  
2007 Master Design

2007 Montgomery  
Co. Builders Assoc.  
Awards (2)

2006 NARI Regional  
CoTY Award

2006 Chrysalis

2005 Montgomery  
Co. Builders Assoc.

2004 Montgomery  
Co. Builders Assoc.

1993 - 2003  
Multiple Awards