

Back To The Future, Episode Three: Reduce, Reuse, Retrofit  
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A Series from Sea Change Radio

[Green architect Betsy Pettit](#) talks about retrofits and what older building methods can teach us about saving energy. And Dan Grossman of [ReStore](#) in Springfield tells us about re-using salvaged building materials.

This month we look at using old style Yankee frugality in building homes -- and adapting existing houses -- to save energy and reduce our carbon footprint. In the U.S. buildings [are responsible for from 48%](#) -- 80% of all carbon emissions. Single-family homes account for a significant portion today -- but they used to use a lot less energy. Green architect Betsy Pettit says homes built in the early years of the last century can teach us a lot about using less energy for cooling and lighting -- and even heating. She [retrofitted her 1916 Sears Kit](#) house to make its carbon footprint tiny -- nearly [zero net energy](#).

Pettit plies her trade with [Building Science Corporation](#) in Boston.

The ReStore in Springfield was founded eight years ago by the [Center for Ecological Technology](#) in Northampton, MA. It takes salvaged materials and surplus stock from the building industry and sells them to the public at low prices, thereby keeping good used stuff out of landfills. The ReStore crew will take a house apart, piece by piece -- including one from the 1700's that used to sit in Rutland, Massachusetts.

When you go to the ReStore, you'll find everything from claw foot tubs to spas, doors, windows, heaps of old lumber, radiators of various vintages, tub surrounds and marble countertops outside. Inside, you can find entire kitchen cabinet sets, lamps hanging from every inch of ceiling space, and everything else for the home from drawer pulls to wiring. Manager John Grossman took Sea Change on a tour.