

'The Hobbitat' Asheville, North Carolina



Project Info:

size: 900 square feet
client: 'The Hobbitat' Residence
contractor/designer: Jessica Kirby, Owner, Jess Of All Trades
completion: 2005



Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville, North Carolina, this unique residential dwelling was designed as perhaps one of the first 'earth-sheltered' or ergonomic structures. Built in 1977, "The Hobbitat" is an underground, one-story home constructed with concrete blocks. The house is bermed by soil on three walls and part of the roof is covered with soil and vegetation.

Due to minor leaks, the owner wanted to update the roofing system. Jessica Kirby, owner of Jess of All Trades, was hired to design and install this renovation.



It was necessary to remove the existing 2-3 feet of soil on the roof in order to make the needed repairs and install a greenroof drainage system. The roof is constructed of concrete blocks two-feet thick. In addition, two new ODC skylights were cut into the roof for additional interior lighting. After soil removal, a 40-mil EPDM membrane was installed followed by J-DRain GRS (GreenRoof Drain System). GRS was placed directly over the roofing membrane. The GRS provides a layer of protection to the new roof membrane and an excellent drainage layer, as well minimizes hydraulic pressure and weight.

Existing soil was then replaced and rye grass was spread as a temporary cover crop. Next spring the owner will plant several perennial gardens so the roof will blend with the natural vegetation of the area.

For an in-depth article about the history of the 'Hobbitat' that was published in "Mother Earth News", March/April, 1981, go to:

http://www.motherearthnews.com/library/1981_March_April/Hibernate_in_a_Hobbitat

