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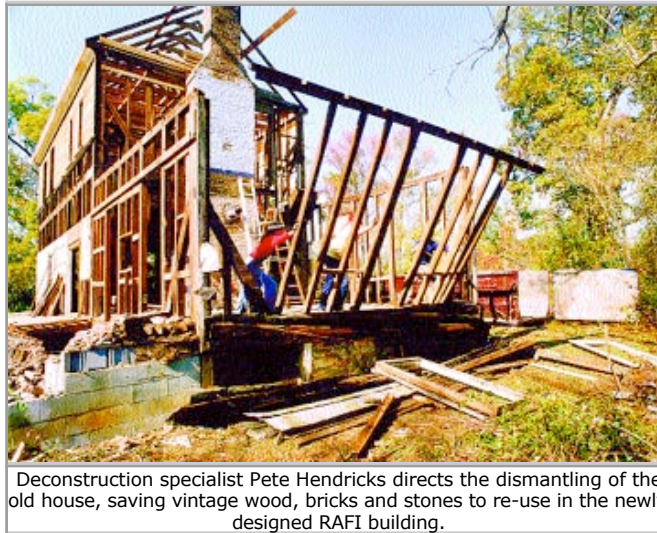
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PITTSBORO - Searching for a space of its own, an environmentally friendly safe haven, RAFI-USA found the perfect place on Pittsboro Elementary School Road in the heart of downtown Pittsboro.



Deconstruction specialist Pete Hendricks directs the dismantling of the old house, saving vintage wood, bricks and stones to re-use in the newly designed RAFI building.

Situated on slightly less than three acres of land shaded by massive oak trees is an award-winning "green building," which the foundation constructed out of materials recycled from the deconstruction of an old house on the property for its headquarters and permanent home.

RAFI-USA (Rural Advancement Foundation International) promotes sustainability, equity and diversity in agriculture through policy changes, practical assistance, market opportunities and access to financial and technical resources. It is not governmentally funded, receiving financial support from individual contributors, private foundations, churches, and fees for publications and services.

"We wanted a building that would embrace RAFI's dual commitments to sustainability and preserving the natural environment," says Kathy Zaumseil, director of administration and facilities manager for the office complex and the Dan Pollitt Conference Center situated at one end of this impressively simple structure designed for optimum energy efficiency.

Her fortuitous association with RAFI has proved rewarding for the Foundation as well as Zaumseil. "Growing up in Australia, I'd developed an interest in international politics and effecting changes in the natural world. My first opportunity was to work as a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal, West Africa."

After returning to the states, Zaumseil settled in Pittsboro to be near family. Here she learned about RAFI-USA and its various missions, all of which coincided with her own commitment to volunteerism. Working part-time at first, Zaumseil was asked to serve as project manager during deconstruction and construction of the new building, then take over as director of administration and facilities manager upon its completion.

"We are accomplishing what we envisioned, offices for other nonprofits and incubator office spaces for individuals with limited resources," Zaumseil says. "All the offices are equipped with high-speed DSL Internet connections, and people who lease them have access to the Pollitt Center and all other amenities available in the building.

"In addition to our staff, current occupants include Carolina Recycling; Michelle Minstrell, a consultant for construction waste reduction and recycling; and Amy Moore's New Day Therapy. We've also had inquiries from a couple of North Carolina Writers Network members who require quietude and tranquility in a working environment."

The 1,700-square-foot Dan Pollitt Center is designed primarily for day retreats, seminars and workshops for non-profit, community and other regional groups. The meeting room can seat 38 around tables and has an occupancy allowance for 50. It offers a built-in projection screen;



*Personal
Transportation*

support for audio-visual equipment; telephone, fax and copier; handicapped accessibility; and a fully equipped kitchen providing preparation space and a staging area for serving meals cooked on-site or brought in.

Proceeds from the center's rental support RAFI's work with family farmers and contract poultry farmers, and many varied activities strengthening relationships that foster sustainability and combat the spread of corporations that hurt the little man and pollute the environment. The center, which is named after RAFI's founding board member Daniel H. Pollitt in honor of his lifelong service in promoting equal rights and opportunities for all people, will be used Friday for a 4 to 6 p.m. reception honoring Sylvia Tomlinson, author of "Plucked and Burned," an exposé of the injustices done to small poultry farmers by large corporate integrators. The public is invited to attend. The address is 274 Pittsboro Elementary School Road. For more information, call (919) 542-1396.

In its brochure, RAFI-USA quotes Thomas Jefferson: "The small landowners are the most precious part of a state. Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens, the most vigorous, most independent and most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the more lasting bonds."

For information on leasing office space or arranging for the use of the Dan Pollitt Conference Center, contact Zaumseil Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Call (919) 542-1396, ext. 204, or e-mail kz@rafiusa.org.

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