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1. Passivhaus doors are imported from Ireland. 2. Control system for Passiv heat and cooling loops. 3. Adam Cohen and Steven Strauss of Structures. 4. Plans hang in Structures office. 5. The Hillel Center at Virginia Tech is nearing completion.

what he believes were the first three solar homes in the Roanoke Valley. They are near Penn Forest.

Structures now has several residential projects built to Passivhaus standards and a major commercial project nearing completion, the Malcolm Rosenberg Hillel Center for Jewish Life at Virginia Tech.

Most of the clients did not start out asking for Passivhaus design but chose it after hearing of its benefits from the Structures team. When Strauss learned of the plans for Hillel at Tech, he asked for an audience with decision makers. He told the group that using Passivhaus for the religious life center was especially fitting because there is a special Hebrew phrase, Tikkun olam, which means “repairing the world.”

Repair the World is also the name of a Jewish volunteer organization.

The Passivhaus technique depends upon virtually airtight construction and gathers its heat from passive solar gain and by heat-creating actions of people and electrical equipment. Its air exchange system promises high air quality. These standards must be achieved while still meeting the client’s needs. The Hillel center presented a special challenge for Cohen because it has two commercial kitchens, which create heat emissions and need special venting. He found guidance from a European project.

Another challenge for Passivhaus construction has been obtaining