

# The Boston Globe

## Students to build solar home amid warehouses

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Boston's Marine Industrial Park, a district of ship piers and old warehouses, may seem the unlikeliest of places to build a sleek, solar-powered home.

But this summer, a team of Massachusetts college students will be assembling the house on a 15,000-square-foot lot in the heart of the sprawling commercial district. The students are entrants in the US Solar Decathlon, a collegiate contest to build the most innovative solar-powered structure.

"We want to show that this technology, if articulated the right way, can be made to be affordable," said Spencer Culhane, a 22-year-old senior from Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Students from the University of Massachusetts Lowell will also be on the 60-person team.

The 958-square-foot home will produce as much energy as it consumes. Culhane said it is designed to house a family of three and will be constructed with photovoltaic panels to generate electricity and a solar water collector to provide hot water.

Culhane said the structure is designed to require 90 percent less energy than a typical home and will be made with 18-inch-thick walls to allow for more insulation. The students are working with a builder of modular home components that will fabricate large sections of the home and ship them to the industrial park site for assembly.

Construction of the home, priced at \$250,000, was approved last week by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. It will first be built in the industrial park and then disassembled and rebuilt in Washington, where it will be judged against homes constructed by 19 other student teams from around the world.

After the contest, the home will be for sale. "One of our primary goals is to have a family actually living in the house after the competition," said Culhane, adding that the team is already talking to interested parties.

The solar project is part of a broader effort by Boston officials to promote the district as an innovation hub that will spur development of new homes, stores, and offices.

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