



Patrick Ross Photography

MAKE OR BREAK

Light Bright

A Maryland firm brings both sustainability and light to a Baltimore row house.

When Susan and Rich Walther decided to retire in a walkable urban neighborhood—instead of the suburbs—they bought an 1,800-square-foot row house in Baltimore. The couple wanted an energy-efficient, green home with tons of light, but they also required that the technologies and features be integrated seamlessly into the house. The older home, of course, didn't have any of these features, so the duo hired Ellicott City, Md.-based Alexander Design Studio to make their dreams a reality.

To accommodate the owners' entire wish list, the architects chose a variety of products, materials, and systems that were instrumental in giving the clients the green home they wanted. One of the most important was the insulation, says architect Eric Lewis, a senior associate at the firm.

"Closed cell spray foam insulation, from Dow Building Solutions, has become an in-

valuable tool for us when creating new projects within existing masonry building shells," Lewis says. "The insulation eliminates infiltration and works within the wall system to achieve very high R-values."

The firm also specified four Samsung mini-split mechanical units, which "are so efficient the homeowners seldom have more than one of the four in use at a time," says Lewis. Each unit is incorporated into the architecture where they are almost invisible.

Because row houses are dark by their nature, the architects employed a variety of clever ways to make the space bright. They used a skylight above the main staircase to do a lot of the work, but they also designed a series of chases and installed T5 adjustable lamps from Jesco Lighting. Lewis says the lamps were able to accomplish a lot, because the "fixtures are extremely small, very bright, and can be installed in tight coves and reveals." — NIGEL F. MAYNARD