

# 1970'S Home Retrofitted With Hempcrete In Groundbreaking Sustainable Building Project



By [Vic Bishop](#) | [Waking Times](#)

The time for hemp is now, and while laws and regulations concerning the production, processing, and consumption of hemp and cannabis slowly move forward, people the world over are pushing the envelope in finding new ways to use hemp.

In May of this year, we reported on an ingenious building design by a group of Moroccan students who built an [off-grid 'hemp' house made almost entirely from hemp and solar panels](#). [Biodegradable hemp Covid-19 face masks](#) are already hitting the market to address the colossal non-biodegradable waste this crisis is creating. A recent agricultural study

pointed out that [planting hemp can even help address the declining bee population](#).

A home in Bellingham, WA is receiving acclaim by those pushing the limits in the development of hemp building materials. Called the [Highland Hemp House](#), the 1970's home has been retrofitted with hempcrete and is now serving as a showcase for materials and techniques in converting older, inefficient housing into modern, sustainable, and very efficient structures.

Pamela Bosch, owner of the Highland Hemp House first became interested in building with hemp about 5 years ago, and after building a test project, she convinced the local city government to grant permits to build a larger structure and begin retrofitting the main house. Beginning the endeavor by finding the right people and materials, Bosch has

*“Bosch stripped away the toxic layers from the walls of her 1970s-era Bellingham, Washington home last spring, and through the summer replaced that material with a hempcrete mixture carefully sourced from suppliers and consultants in Europe.*

*She also convinced local authorities about hemp's viability and successfully worked her project through local building codes – complex undertakings she'll share at IHBA.”* [[Source](#)]

The project is serving as a classroom for many other innovators who are learning how to use hemp in construction to further the goal of moving toward a more sustainable and efficient future. Speaking on the importance of this, and why America needs hempcrete in particular now more than ever, Bosch comments:

*“In the US, we are not exposed to residences that have been occupied for centuries as in Europe, Asia, and Africa—especially on the West Coast. But don't we want*

*buildings to endure? Wouldn't it be a better use of materials to design for functional longevity? Hempcrete is essentially reconstituted limestone. It is not dissimilar to many buildings of antiquity that used burned lime as a binder and a surface treatment.*

*□Nature has utilized lime/calcium for shelter and structure for hundreds of millions of years. Nothing synthetic can compare. For endurance, health, versatility or performance.*

*Elsewhere you have read about the energy conserving, carbon capturing benefits of building with lime and bio-aggregate. Consider now how calcium, the building block of ancient skeletons and exoskeletons cycles throughout the earth's crust and her inhabitants. Concrete, in which calcium is a primary element is ubiquitous in modern times, but lime has more endurance and better hygroscopic performance; it is better suited for above ground walls though it uses a fraction of the energy that concrete needs for processing."*

*~[Pamela Bosch](#)*

The project is the first stick frame hempcrete retrofit in North America and Pamela Bosch has been invited to share the journey of this process at the International Hemp Building Symposium in Brussels, later this month. She talks about how this type of innovation is needed to change the world we live in:

*"I am not an architect. I am not a media person. Not a builder. A business. Or a contractor. I've had to be all those things, but I am no expert at any of them. What I might call myself is a performance artist—with big props. My house is a one off.*

*So, if I can build a house out of materials that are not well understood, so can you. The reasons to do so are too compelling not to try.*

*I've heard, in keynote speeches and trade organization networks, that changing the world requires that we call on our innovators; that we step outside of our routines and our roles; that we see past our immediate and individual desires to our collective needs. "Urgent" that we adapt. And yet our support systems are inflexible.*

*HHH is a social experiment as much as it is a building experiment. It's a party house. A space in a neighborhood setting that invites inquiry, scrutiny, feeling the space. What's different? How do we gather in this place? A house of hemp is mysteriously comfortable. Seashell wrapping. It must be experienced." ~[Pamela Bosch](#)*

Learn more about this project in the following video:

### **About the Author**

**[Vic Bishop](#)** is a staff writer for [WakingTimes.com](#) and [OffgridOutpost.com Survival Tips](#) blog. He is an observer of people, animals, nature, and he loves to ponder the connection and relationship between them all. A believer in always striving to [become self-sufficient](#) and free from the matrix, please track him down on [Facebook](#).

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