

Benjamin Obdyke

TINY HOUSE Case Study

The tiny house movement, a campaign aimed at minimizing homeowner debt and the environmental footprint of the housing industry, has taken the nation by storm. Minimalistic and featuring sustainable building products, tiny houses exhibit how building *better* doesn't necessarily mean building *bigger*. Products like Benjamin Obdyke's [Cedar Breather](#)[®] Ventilated Underlayment and [Slicker](#)[®] [Classic](#) Rainscreen are helping to facilitate the program's sustainable construction initiatives.

Browse the listings of your favorite do-it-yourself channel or magazine and you are sure to come across something regarding the rapidly growing program. From appearances on the *Today Show*, to regular programs like *Tiny House Nation*, the idea of downsizing in all aspects of life has gained the appeal of the American audience.

"Tiny houses are an example of affordable construction of off-the-grid mobile housing from sustainable, ecological, repurposed and recycled materials," said longtime environmental advocate Vera Struck. "When you build tiny, you need to build smart." Struck is currently working on her own tiny home in Massachusetts. She will take her project, [The Silver Bullet Tiny House](#), on the road next spring to educate others on the importance of sustainable living.

According to [thetinylife.com](#), the average tiny house is 186 square feet (nearly 11 times smaller than the standard size of a U.S. home). The tiny house features all aspects of a normal dwelling, including bathroom, kitchen and bedroom areas. Because of the reduction of living area, spaces are carefully planned. The meticulous preparation is not limited to floor plan development.

A large part of the tiny house appeal is the reduction of costs. The same report from [thetinylife.com](#) notes that nearly 80 percent of tiny homeowners are mortgage free. Low purchase and build costs are sustained over time by building with superior building products. Sustainable supplies help maintain energy efficiency and reduce the need for repair. But sustainable building doesn't come without its challenges.

"Some of the challenges faced in sustainable construction include vetting of materials (both new and recycled), redesigning with life cycle analysis (LCA) in mind, constructing process that

assumes resource repurposing itself, energy output and carbon footprint, and cost and installation time," Struck noted.

To make things easier, tiny homebuilders have relied on industry leading suppliers for solutions. In the case of Struck's Silver Bullet home, roof and wall products from Benjamin Obdyke offered optimal "breathability and ventilation of the exterior envelope." To help contribute to the life of the structure, Struck specified Benjamin Obdyke's Cedar Breather® Ventilated Underlayment and Slicker® Classic Rainscreen.

Because the Silver Bullet features metal roofing, Struck wanted an underlayment that would provide cushioning while still eliminating excess moisture. In addition to meeting Struck's requirements, Cedar Breather® also provided a space for continuous airflow underneath the roofing material.

The wall assembly was also another area of concern for Struck. Realizing that structural rot and mold caused by invasive moisture can lead to problems with not only the assembly of the home, but also to its occupants, Struck opted to utilize Benjamin Obdyke's Slicker® Classic Rainscreen to protect the wall assembly.

With vertical channels that route moisture out of the wall cavity, the three-dimensional Slicker® Classic also provides a continuous space for drying. The product's ability to sustain a thermal break and pressure minimization also work to eliminate the threat of trapped moisture.

Struck has been pleased with the performance aspects of the products, "The Benjamin Obdyke products address all of the sustainable construction challenges. They are cost effective, easy to install, eliminates moisture and rotting and provides cushioning."

As advocates of the tiny home movement multiply, so too will ideas for improving the building practices of the minimalist structures. With proactive products and solutions like those from Benjamin Obdyke, tiny homebuilders will continue to build better.