



Free Press Photo by IRENE FERTIK

WORK CONTINUES ON BURLINGTON'S SOLAR OFFICE BUILDING
... a good southern exposure will give it plenty of sun

Burlington's First Solar Office Building Under Way

By ALAN ABBEY

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Builders of Burlington's first solar office building hope it will help light up the North Street neighborhood.

Moose Creek Restoration Ltd. and two related firms, Comfortech and Icarus Solar Construction, are building their 4,800-square-foot office on the site of an abandoned dry cleaning shop, near the intersection of North Street and North Avenue.

"It is a good location in an area that has got to improve. We would like to help it along," Sam Johnson, vice president of Moose Creek, said.

The site also has a good southern exposure, which aids use of solar energy, building designer Sandy Post said.

The three oval prefabricated huts that had composed the dry cleaning establishment were going to be incorporated into the design, Ms. Post said, but could not be adapted to use solar energy. Two arches will be retained indoors as part of the design. Arches will be used throughout the building, she said.

The second floor will have a floor-to-ceiling window, known as a "thrombe," which will collect

the sun's heat and be stored in concrete blocks. The large mass protects the building from overheating. When the building is cooler than the mass it will radiate the heat throughout, project manager Peter Close said.

Fans may be used to circulate the heat to the back of the building, he said. Some sort of backup heating system will be installed, but they do not know yet what type, Close said.

The concrete blocks are new for this area, Close said, and carry a high insulation value. Standard glass wool or foam insulation will not be needed for most of the building.

The first-floor reception area will include a greenhouse, Ms. Post said.

Ms. Post said she knows of other solar office buildings being designed, but said Moose Creek's is the first to start construction. A completion date of mid-September is planned, about the time they expect to hear about a federal Department of Energy grant application.

In the meantime, the entire Moose Creek staff is working out of two construction trailers wedged into an alley between their new office and a tavern.