Home Energy & Improvement

YOUR GUIDE TO THOSE FALL HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

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R2000 homes designed to breath

Getting fresh air into an airtight house sounds impossible, but it is something the super energy efficient R-2000 Home is designed to do, naturally, just like breathing.

In a way, a heavily insulated R-2000 Home does breathe through a mechanical ventilation system, exhaling stale inside air and inhaling fresh outside air...in most cases recovering valuable heat at the same time.

The result is cleaner air and dramatically lower heating costs than in conventional houses where the air inside the house is usually replaced by outside air every half hour. Warm house air which the homeowner has paid money to heat, randomly flows out through cracks and small holes in the exterior walls and roof.

Researchers estimate that air leakage from a conventional house can be responsible for as much as half of the house's total heat loss. In short, it is like having a big hole in the front door.

The R-2000 Home, however, is a much different story. Its airtightness is achieved through the careful installation of a continuous air-vapour barrier on the warm side of the insulation. This barrier prevents the penetration of outside drafts and the escape of comfortable interior air. Special techniques have been developed in the R-2000 Home so that electrical wire, plumbing pipes, floor headers and even ceiling joists don't break the sealed air-vapour barrier.

Because of this special barrier, an R-2000 Home requires a ventilation system to exhaust stale air and supply fresh air throughout the house. Otherwise, daily air pollution caused by humidity from cooking, washing and plants, formaldehyde from furniture and carpeting, household chemicals from cleaning products and solvents, tobacco smoke, viruses and bacteria would build up, producing a musty, potentially unhealthy environment.

In an R-2000 Home, this doesn't happen because the special mechanical ventilation system continuously draws in fresh air, filters it and distributes it evenly throughout the house, while exhausting the stale, indoor air. Most R-2000 Homes also feature a heat recovery ventilator (HRV) which can extract as much as 75 per cent of the heat from exhaust air and use it to prewarm the incoming stream of fresh air.

The advanced controlled ventilation system reduces heating costs to about a third of those for a cenventional house and it does much more according to the authorities in this area.

There is no temperature stratification, as occurs in many conventional houses, but rather an even ditribution of heat. The temperature in the bedroom for example, is invariably the same as in all other rooms in the house.

In addition to providing uniform temperature throughout the house, with virtually no drafts, the controlled ventilation system also controls humidity and removes dust, smoke and all other allergens. It is exceptionally quiet, and it makes the R-2000 Home warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

To maintain the desired levels of fresh air to the living area, clothes dryers, central vacuum cleaners and space heating and hot water systems are supplied with air through a separate system. Each fireplace in an R-2000 Home also needs its own supply of air for combustion, so glass doors must be placed across the hearth front to separate it from the house's controlled ventilation system.

That indeed is a small price to pay for the many benefits of the R-2000 Home, which is tested for air leakage through a fan depressurization test.

In this test, all windows, vents and other openings in the house are closed and the front door is replaced with a special door equipped with an exhaust fan to draw air out of the house and reduce the indoor air pressure. A computer then measures how long it takes for the air pressure inside the house to return to normal.

This measurement can be used to help predict the actual heating costs for each R-2000 Home. If the amount of air leakage exceeds R-2000 Home program requirements, a smoke pencil or a special meter is used to pinpoint air leaks, which are subsequently sealed. The test is repeated until the R-2000 standard is met.

With attention to detail and quality assurance tests, such as the fan depressurization test, R-2000 builders are offering Canadians a home with cleaner air and dramatically lower heating costs.

October Renovation Month

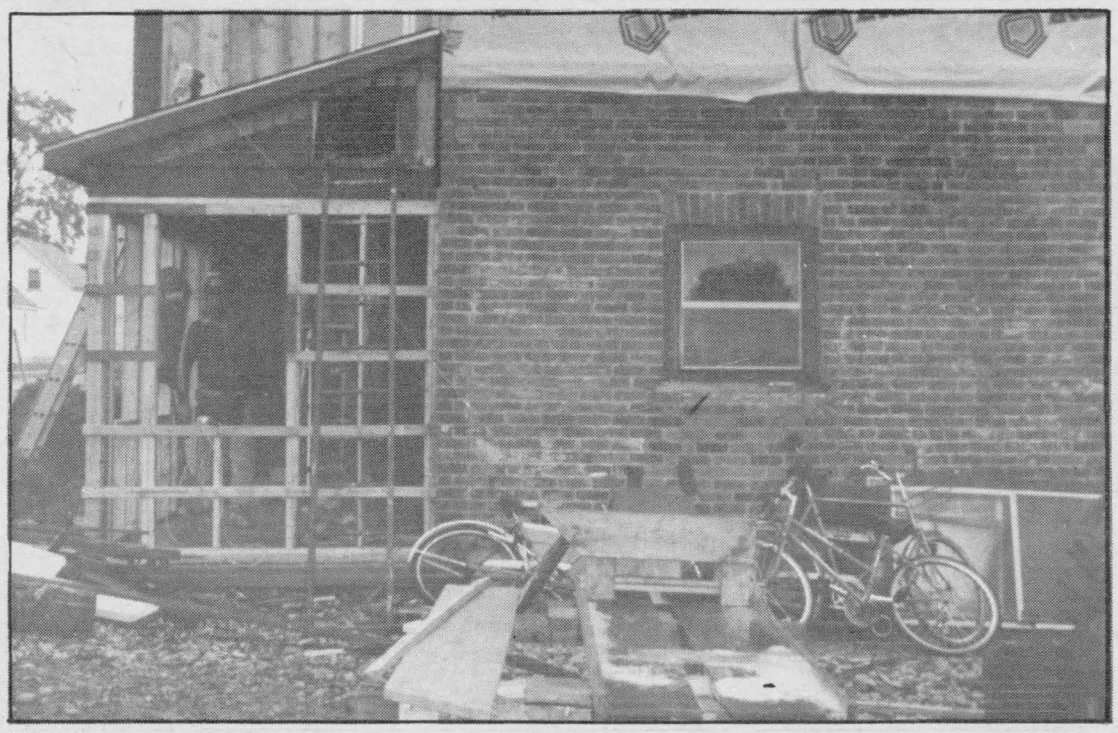
October 1992 has been proclaimed as Renovation Month by Elmer MacKay, Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, on behalf of the Government of Canada.

He called on Canadians to recognize the importance of the renovation industry in enhancing housing quality.

Mr. MacKay noted that particular attention should be given to environmental concerns and energy efficient when undertaking renovations.

In issuing his proclamation, Mr. MacKay referred to the lead role played by the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) in organizing Renovation Month. He recognized the opportunities created for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CHBA, the sponsors and other organizations in making available consumer information to help homeowners become better informed about renovations and the renovation process to make informed decisions when considering their options.

Consumer information is disseminated through local activities by home builder associations and other participating organizations. Since last year's Renovation Month, CMHC has added three new titles to is broad range of renovation publications ("Avoiding Renovation Hazards", "Lead In Your Home", and "Old Paint, Lead and Your Family's Health"). CMHC videos that provide consumers with renovation advice are also available.



Necessary Improvements

Chieftain photo by S.L.Johnston

Closing in a sun porch or a veranda can provide much needed and wanted living space that can be utililized all year round. As the family grows more space is needed for each member to feel rested and realxed. This is an option for some folks with older homes . When constructing a new home, perhaps a porch or veranda is a good idea for the future as well as right now. These gents in Cardinal are hoping to be completely closed in before the cold weather arrives. A winter project, they can work at in their spare time, this was looking good.

Shopping for a home?

What to expect from the home inspector

Despite the recession, many people today are in an excellent position to buy a home - particularly families with down payments and no current home to sell. For them, lower house prices and near-record lows in mortgage interest rates have opened a window of opportunity not available in the past 10 years.

In addition to these advantages, today's home buyers are also dealing with a new element in the transaction: the professional home inspection. In many parts of the country, this pre-purchase evaluation of a home's condition has become routine, providing buyers with the vital information they need to make a sound purchasing decision.

Since the profession is still relatively young, however, it is critical for buyers to learn something about it so they will understand what may - and what may not - be expected from their chosen home inspector.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Professional Standards

While there are no Provincial or Federal guidelines, home inspectors are generally expected to follow the Standards of Practice established by the Canadian Association of Home Inspectors (CAHI), widely recognized as the leading authority in the field. This is a document which specifies all the components of a home that are to be included in an inspection, from the roof to the foundation. The Standards are considered to be the benchmark of performance for home inspectors. A free copy is available by writing to Box 370, Station Z, Toronto, Ontario, M5N 2Z5, or by calling (416) 964-6203.

Ethics

To be sure that a home inspector is ethical and professional, consumers should ascertain before the inspection that he or she will NOT offer to do any repairs on the inspected property, and that the firm has no financial interest in the transaction, or in the real estate agent's commission. Any indication of such conflict of interest activities should send up the red flag to tell consumers to look for another inspector.

Service

Home inspectors are generalists, much like medical General Practitioners. They know how the home's many systems and components work, both independently and together, and they understand how and why they fail. Consumers should expect the written report to describe the actual condition of the home at the time of the inspection based upon visual observation, and to provide an indication of the need for major repairs.

What Not to Expect

Home inspectors do not do any destructive testing, nor can they see through walls, and so consumers should not expect their reports to include the condition of every nail, wire or pipe in the home. In addition, inspectors are primarily concerned with pointing out large expenses and/or safety related concerns, rather than small or cosmetic items, which are considered readily apparent to buyers themselves.

Finally, home inspectors should not expect the inspector's report to serve as a guarantee that the home's components won't ever fail or need repair at some point in the future. No house is perfect and they all need regular maintenance and repair.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS TO LOOK FOR

In recent years, literally dozens of groups and organizations have been formed to capitalize on the marketing opportunities of this rapidly-growing profession. This can make the selection of a qualified professional extremely difficult.

To date, the Canadian Association of Home Inspectors and its affiliate, the American Society for Home Inspectors (ASHI), are the only non-profit professional organizations in the U.S. and Canada which rigorously test home inspectors on their technical knowledge and diagnostic expertise in relation to residential construction. Membership requires experience prior to admission, as well as continuing education annually after admission in order to keep current with new technology and building practices. The names of members may be obtained by calling (416) 964-6203.

If the selection of a home inspector is made carefully and ahead of time, home buyers have one less detail to worry about during the chaos and excitement of finding a new home.

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Many ways to spruce up tired fireplaces

A variety of accessories, conversions and refacing services are available to revamp tired looking mantlepieces, increase efficiency and even eliminate the necessity of chopping kindling.

Depending upon how much you want to spend, you can jazz up an existing fireplace or go all the way and reface the entire fireplace to give it a totally new look.

An existing mantle can be covered with non-combustible sheeting and finishing can be accomplished with wood; oak or pine.

Painted brick can be covered with thin brick slices to give a new look to your fireplace.

Made-to-measure doors will help your fireplace burn more efficiently. The hearth can be recovered with marble, granite or a variety of other materials.

When the idea to revamp a room strikes, it is wisest to redo the fireplace first and then build the rest of the room around it.

Gas conversions have become popular in the past few years. Many homeowners are fed up with dragging wood, bark, chips, dirt or even bugs into their living rooms. The conversion is relatively cheap and can be most efficient. They feature a realistic yellow flame that closely emulates wood flames.

Real estate agents say that fireplaces boost the resale value of homes, new and older ones.

What can match the coziness of a fireplace on a snowy winter evening? Not too much...and although fireplaces often contribute much to the design of a room, they were never intended to heat the entire house.

On a seasonal basis, most fireplaces waste more heat than they produce, but there are ways to reduce the heat loss by using the fireplace more efficiently. Building large fires that will last a long time makes sense. The fireplace damper should be set at the smallest possible opening that will not result in smoke backing up in the room. As the fire dies down, covering the fireplace opening with sheet metal or closing the glass doors will help. When the fireplace is not in use, it is important to keep the doors or covers tightly shut. Be certain that the damper closes tightly. If it becomes warped, replace it.

Fireplace inserts are wood burning space heaters that fit into and effectively seal the fireplace opening. Correctly installed, these can greatly improve the efficiency of the fireplace, but there are risks that everyone should be aware of. Inserts block much of the excess air that typically flows through the fireplace's chimney. This means that flue gases become much hotter than usual and the surfaces of the insert itself becomes extremely hot. Combined, these factors can result in overheating of the fireplace and chimney and even in chimney fires.

If you do purchase one, be sure it meets the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada standard for fireplace inserts. This standrad also sets out requirements for installation. Check with local fire and building codes before you buy. During the first few months of operation you have to inspect the unit frequently .

If you are going to construct a new fireplace, consider buying a pre-fabricated, air-circulating, zero clearance fireplace. These are constructed entirely of steel and do not need the traditional masonary shell. They will perform realtively efficiently when operated with the doors and air inlets closed and the damper open minimally.

Curling up in front of the fireplace, with a good book or listening to quiet, soothing music can make a perfect evening. The traditional atmosphere of a room with the crackle of wood burning in the fireplace congers up romance and leisure activity second to none.

A focal point in a room, the fireplace is as important today as yesterday.

Floral patterns popular

Led by the revival of Victorian style, floral patterns continue to grow in acceptance in all areas of interior design. Contemporary interior design has learned how to adapt flower patterns to its own particular needs, as well, using floral motifs so large that they are effectively lost in folds of fabric.

Flowered drapes are very popular, and when large floral motifs are hung the effect tends to soften a modern design.

Drapery colours are darker this year, a change from the pastel colours of the last few years. This is consistent with colour trends generally in interior decoration. Purple and dard green are among the darker drapery colours found in this new trend.

DEADLINES

Photo Announcements.....Mon. Noon
News Items.....Mon. 5 p.m.
Display Ads.....Mon. 5 p.m.
Classified Ads.....Mon. 5 p.m.
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Consumers not wishing to receive the Canada 125 Coin Collection can claim a $100 rebate from Frigidaire.

See dealer for details.

Canada 125

Wooden furniture making comeback in the bedroom

Wood is making a comeback in the bedroom.

Some of the glorious wooden furniture designs of the past are being welcomed back into the modern bedroom by interior designers.

In many cases designers are giving various pieces of wooden furniture an old fashioned feel by having them painted in darker colours, greens and burgundies being very popular.

Wooden slats and spindles are beginning to reappear on headboards. It's all part of the trend toward an old-fashioned look that is becoming stylish in all areas of interior decorating. Headboard slats and spindles are available in iron as well as wood.

The Shaker furniture style has had a large influence on current trends. It's a sober style that removes all superfluous lines. Durable and functional, Shaker pieces are often made of maple softened by a cobalt blue, emerald green or gray shade of paint.

Complementing this more antique style of furniture in the bedroom are pillows and down cushions covered with old-fashioned floral prints emphasizing darker colours.



Pleased to serve

Thompson's Lumber has been a part of numerous new homes in the area, as well as in countless renovation projects. Their family business has catered to the needs of builders, whether do-it-your-selfers or contractors for many years. Here two of the family, Ken Hasson and Jamie Thompson take a break and pose in the kitchen cabinet area of their store display. *Chieftain photo by S.L. Johnston*

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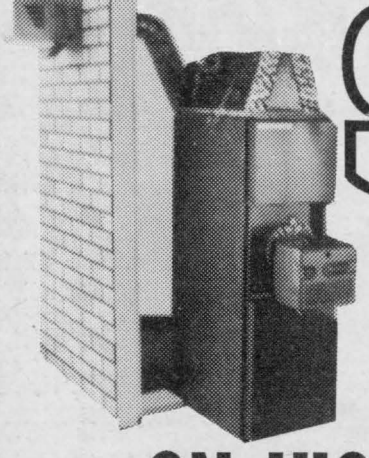
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IT PAYS TO HEAT WITH OIL

Fall good time to inspect your roof for damage

If you're a homeowner, Ontario's consumer ministry suggests you pull out a pair of binoculars - but not for birdwatching. Fall is a good month to inspect your roof for damage that needs repair.

Marilyn Gurevsky, a manager with Ontario's Consumer Services Bureaus says, "People are sometimes tempted to postpone roofing work because of the cost. But this is almost always a mistake. A minor problem that needs correction now can turn into a full replacement job that will cost a lot more money by next spring."

To check your roof, focus the binoculars on the shingles first. Signs of wind or weather damage to asphalt shingles - the roof-covering most commonly used in Ontario - should stand out. Shingles that are cracked, curled, loose or missing are signals that repairs are needed. If many of the mineral granules have been lost from the shingles, that means they're worn.

A note of caution - whether you spot a single crack or see that half the shingles are missing, resist the temptation to climb onto the roof for a closer look. Unless you're a gymnast or are familiar with construction work, you won't be safe stepping onto a steep, slippery roof.

"Roofing problems can develop at any time, but you should begin to expect some trouble when your roof reaches the age of eight to 10 years," says Gurevsky. Most roof shingles sold today are made to last about 15 years, but the life-span of older shingles may be less.

As well as damaged, worn or missing shingles, consumers should look for other signs of common problems.

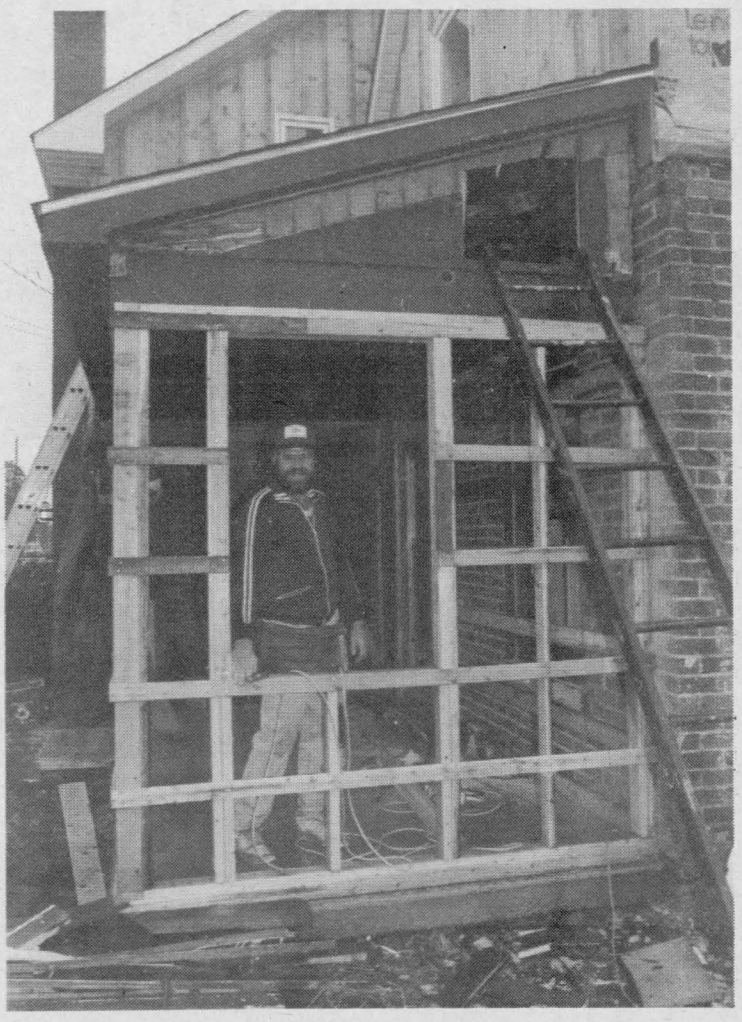
- Metal flashings around the chimney or in the valleys at roof joints that are corroded, cracked or have lifted, indicate that water may have seeped in and damaged the roof deck. On a roof less than 10 years old, metal flashings can normally be patched. But on an older roof, full replacement is usually necessary.
- If shingles along the bottom of the roof appear raised, it may be a sign of damage from ice damming - a problem in many Canadian homes. In winter, snow at the top of the roof melts when warmed by heat escaping from the attic. The water flows down the roof under the snow and freezes again at the unheated edge of the eaves. This ice acts as a dam, pushing more melted water back up the roof and under the shingles, where it can leak through.
- Have a look in the attic for signs of water leakage. Special trouble spots are the points where rafters or beams pass under a roof junction, the rafters along the eaves and around plumbing - system air vents and chimney. It's probably time to replace the roof if it is more than 10 years old and you find warped, watermarked or rotted wood at a couple of these locations.

Once you've decided your roof needs repairs or replacement, you'll want to find a reliable contractor.

"Start by getting references from friends and neighbors," says Gurevsky. "Then call three professionals for quotes and get all the details of the work in writing - both in the estimate and on the contract. Most reputable roofers provide a one-to two-year guarantee on labor."

The contractor should take the time to discuss each phase of the work with you. Gurevsky says roofing work is fairly straightforward, so you can get an idea of how good a job a roofer will do by asking a few simple questions.

- Will the old shingles be torn off and disposed of? Shingles need only be removed every second or third time they're replaced unless they're in very bad shape or there's damage beneath. The weight from too many layers of shingles on a roof can cause structural damage to a building. If the shingles are being removed, ask how long it'll take. This will tell you how long you'll have to put up with a mess in your yard.
- Is eaves protection to be installed? Eaves protection combats the problem of roof damage from ice damming. It's a roll-on material made to standards approved under the Ontario Building Code, laid on top of the roof deck from the eave to a foot above the exterior wall. It'll prevent water that does back up from leaking through the roof.
- What kinds of shingles and metal flashings will be used? Shingles with extended warranties will last the longest. In general, good shingles are guaranteed by the manufacturer for a minimum of 15 years. A competent contractor will be able to help you choose a good-quality shingle. Some will offer guidance on choosing a color that compliments your home. Gurevsky advises choosing a shade that contrasts slightly with your exterior walls. But she suggests consumers should avoid very light colors because they make any damage highly visible.



Necessary improvements

Closing in an unused porch area can give that little extra needed for entertaining or just enjoying the home fully. One problem can be that few verandahs have basements under them and are sitting on a cement slab. When delving into unknown territory, it is best to seek professional advice. This room in Cardinal should be ready to celebrate Christmas in, this year. *Chieftain photo by S.L. Johnston*

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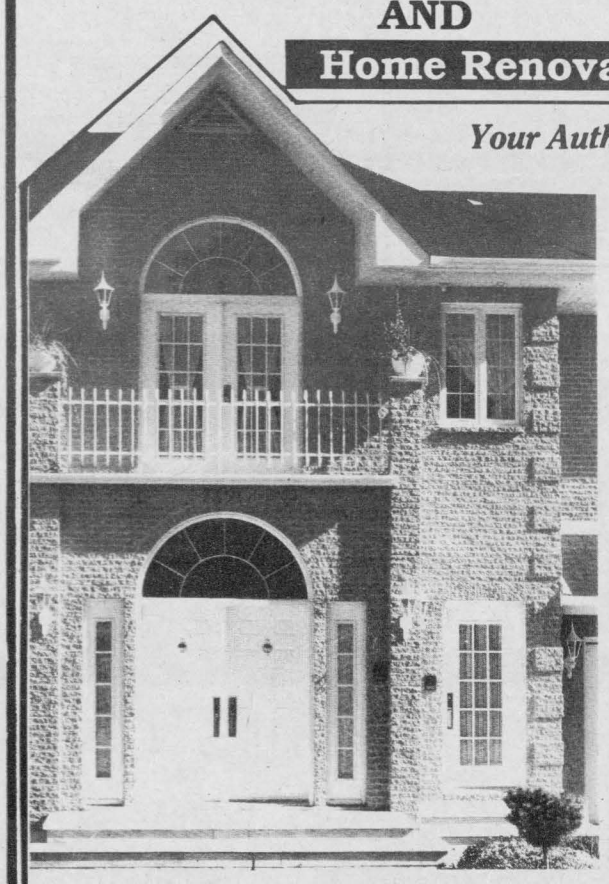
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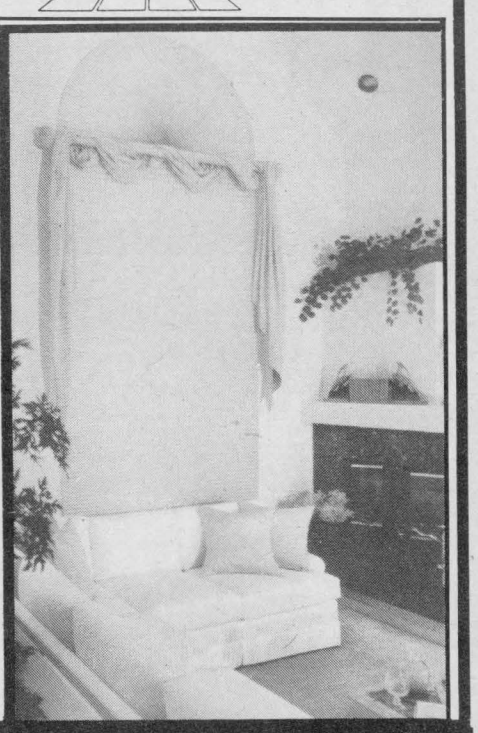
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Chieftain photo by S.L. Johnston

Inspect your heating system now

You can wait until the first serious frost to have your heating system inspected. But with this year's unpredictable weather, the safe money's betting winter will be at your door sooner than expected.

Experts at Ontario's Fuel Safety Branch say October is a great month for the annual check to make sure your heating system is operating safely and efficiently.

"If it's cold in October, most home-heating contractors will be too busy to take on extra fall maintenance and repair work," says Michael Philip, director of the branch, part of Ontario's consumer ministry. "Have your heating system serviced soon, by a home-heating contractor registered with our branch. You'll be ready for the first cold night."

An annual check of heating systems is vital for home safety. The risk of fire, explosion and carbon monoxide poisoning exist with all types of fuel-burning heating systems, if they aren't cared for properly.

In furnaces fueled by oil or natural gas, heat is produced by combining fuel with the oxygen in the air, then igniting it in the furnace's combustion chamber.

When your heating system is running properly, the exhaust fumes rise up the chimney and present no danger. But if your furnace isn't burning cleanly, or the chimney is blocked, large amounts of carbon monoxide - a colorless, odorless gas that causes headaches, nausea and even death - can escape into the house.

Because safety is at stake, it's important to deal with a qualified home-heating contractor. "An untrained service person who doesn't do the work properly could put lives and property at risk," explains Philip.

Many consumers deal with the same reputable contractor year after year. But if you need to find someone to do the job, keep these tips in mind.

- Find out if the work is covered by a warranty or maintenance plan before hiring a contractor. If it is, you may be obliged to hire a particular firm, or from a list of contractors recommended by your fuel supplier or furnace manufacturer.
- Ask your fuel supplier, neighbours and friends for recommendations.
- Obtain written estimates of the work to be done and who will do it.

If you need a new furnace, experts at the Ministry of Energy suggest you consider a more energy-efficient model. Savings of up to $300 per year have been reported for high-efficiency gas furnaces.

The energy ministry also emphasizes the importance of hiring a reputable contractor, because the heating system must be well-designed and carefully installed to yield fuel-cost savings.

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Preserving the craftmanship of times gone by

Many today are interested in the past and in perserving it. Nostalgia is in the fore in many areas today, even in houses. More and more people are buying older homes. Whether for reasons of investment, architectural appreciation or just as a way of adding a touch of yesteryear to their lives.

These homes are a tribute to the craftsmanship of times gone by. Complete with unusual crannies and ornate detail not found in their modern counterparts.

The original splendor of an older home, if it is to be brought back, will no doubt require some elbow grease and effort.

When planning renovations on an older home it is important to firstly decide what exactly you would like to do to the house. Whether you want to totally restore it from top to bottom, to blend past and present together for a unique look that carries your imprint as well.

Renovations are divided into three categories: restoration, rehabilitation and redesign.

When restoring an older home, you are essentially returning the structure, as much as possible to its original appearance and condition. This technique is used mainly on buildings of historical or architectural interest.

This is expensive and involves the removal of additions and details made during later dates. For example, historical societies most often opt for restoration.

Rehabilitation is the process which makes the house fully functional by keeping the best period details of the house while allowing for modern comforts and conveniences.

New elements are added to the structure, but they blend with the style and mood of the house.

Redesigning makes use of the barest essentials and completely alters the existing home with new materials. Redesign is often used when the house is of inferior design or made from inferior material, or when the owner intends to use it for a different purpose than it was originally intended, such as an office or apartment complex.

Once you decide upon the type of renovation your home requires and what your budget restrictions are, you should find out the answers to some pertinent questions before proceeding...when was the house built? Who did the actual construction, whether a craftsman or a farmer, etc.? what was the original style of the house...log, brick, stone, frame, etc. Georgian, Victorian etc.? who were the previous tenants? Helping you get a real feel for the house, as well as acting as a good indicator of the way the house might have looked originally, this info may aid in numerous other ways as well.

Depending upon your financial situation, you can hire someone to do the work for you or attack it yourself, over a period of time.

If you choose to go at things yourself, it is important to develop a plan of action before you begin and "guestimate" a time frame for each phase of the work.

If your budget allows and you hire the services of an architect and a builder, the renovations will probably be accomplished immediately.

It is prime that you and those you hire have a thorough knowledge of and experience with the building codes and standards, the best available tradepeople, easy access to reproduction materials and historic building practices.

A structural analysis of the home, as well as cost estimates and a set of working drawings of the house layout will benefit everyone concerned with the project.

Once the work is completed, the landscaping should not be forgotten. Try to recreate the past by choosing pathways, hedges, flowers and gardens that compliment the period of your home, thus tying together the overall theme and achieveing the desired effect.

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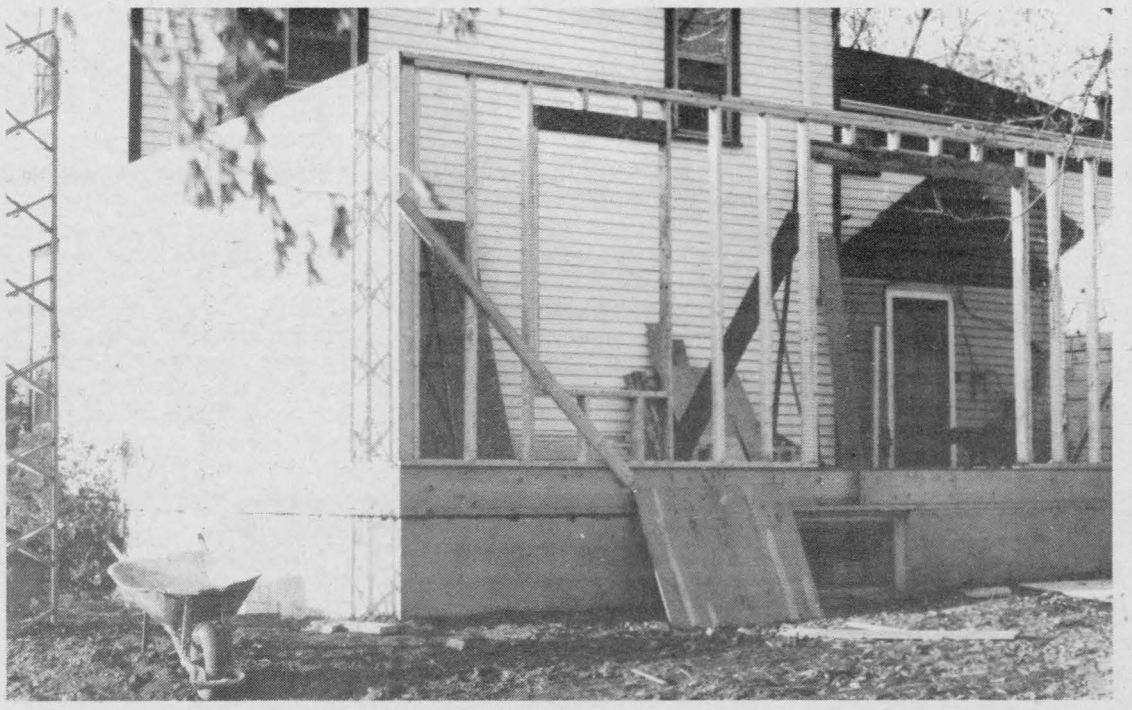
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Chieftain photo by S.L. Johnston

Additions help

Adding a room can provide a family with needed space and more freedom. This room is a family room that allows everyone to get away from the rest of the house and be secluded for a while if they seek solitude. Set off from the kitchen and the living room, it provides an area for entertaining etc. that does not affect the other rooms in the house. A solution can always be found.

Romantic, old fashioned trends in interior design

There's more warmth today in interior decorating trends, and this reflects what people want.

People are going out less and are entertaining more at home. They want warmer decor, something that feels more durable and natural.

Interiors today tend to be more old fashioned, more romantic. Materials are more natural: wood,copper and other metals being used extensively in furniture.

Incandescent lighting is making a comeback. Warmer and less direct, it is being marketed mainly in the form of small lamps with lamp shades mounted on a lamp stand that has an antique feel. Halogen lamps are also regaining popularity. There are some beautiful standard brass halogen lamps on the market.

There is a trend to combine incandescent and halogen lighting in the same room. The warm ambience of incandescent lighting is being paired with halogen's practicality.

A good reading lamp provides functional lighting. It's also a good idea to find a lamp that provides maximum lighting for a room when needed. It's always better to choose models that have two or more brightness settings.

For lighting ambience you could buy a lamp with lamp shade and a brass or ceramic base that has an old-fashioned touch to it.

New lease on life for bathrooms

New processes allow you to spruce up bathrooms without having to change their basic elements. The result is a sparkling new look at an affordable cost.

One of the more remarkable new processes is a synthetic porcelain that is chemically bonded to the surface of bathroom fixtures, giving them a shiny and resistant finish.

This synthetic porcelain adheres to bathtubs, toilets, ceramic tiles, iron, steel and synthetic materials. It can be used to great advantage on bathroom pieces that are dull, worn, or spotted.

Applying synthetic porcelain takes only a few hours of work without having to move any of the fixtures. And it can be done cleanly without turning the bathroom into a battleground.

Easy to maintain, synthetic porcelain conserves its sparkle for years. There is a large range of colours available.

Window blinds always in style

Window blinds long ago became an accepted fact of interior design, but their design continues to change.

This year wooden blinds are making a big comeback. It wouldn't be surprising to see them occupy a large part of the market over the next little while. Wooden blinds were the original blinds created in the 1920's. Today, however, they look very different than they used to. They are more subtle and available in much larger ranges of colours.

Vinyl binds have the advantage of offering greater diversity. Manufacturers continue to produce a wide assortment of colours and new styles. The price for PVC blinds is still reasonable for a good quality product. Of course you can always pay a bit more for better quality and a more pleasing aesthetic effect.

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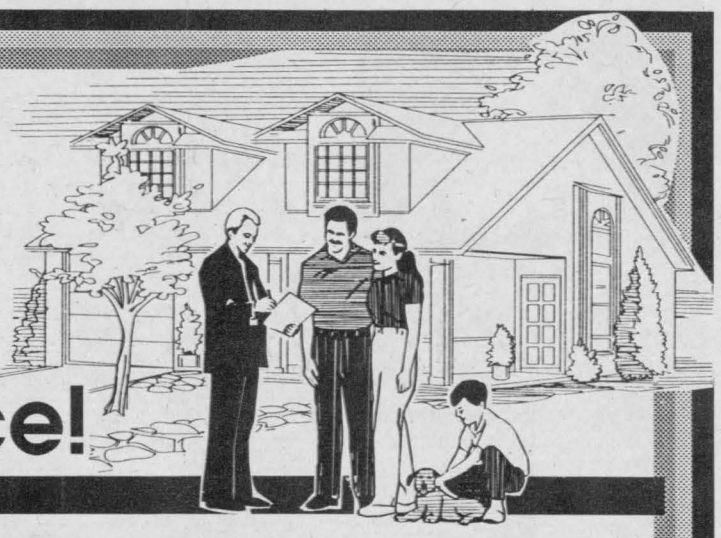
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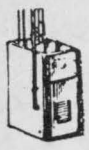
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Under foot

Flooring is a major item when building new or renovating. What is under the feet that walk, run and use the floor space in a home can be vital to the beauty and the atmosphere of a room. When choosing what you need and want, consider the traffic the area will get and how long you plan to have the flooring down. Cost is the last thing to consider, since this is one important item. *Chieftain photo by S.L. Johnston*

Durable floor coverings last

Consumers today are willing to invest more money in floor coverings that will last longer. Durability has become the watchword.

Linoleum, a former bellweather floor covering, is back in fashion because it is a durable and easily maintained material. There is also now a good choice of colours and patterns available in linoleum. It is usually available in a square-tile format of convenient sizes. Linoleum is installed in a manner that requires little followup care.

Hemp rugs, which have an ancient past, also are making a comeback. The hemp plant from which they are made has qualities that create a durable floor covering.

Seaweed produces a braided rug that wears extremely well. This is a material that was often seen years ago and is now coming back because of its long-lasting qualities.

Choosing staircase big decision

A staircase is a major part of the house and its choice cannot be made lightly.

Aesthetic considerations are certainly important, but they can't be the only criteria.

The wood of the staircase itself, the finish and the installation are essential factors to examine. Consider the type of wood that will best suite the surrounding decor. It should be good quality wood that will not warp. The wood should not be too green to avoid shrinkage when it dries inside the house.

The finish applied to the wood must be resistant to wear. Some retailers offer the option of having a finish applied in the factory if you wish to avoid any disagreeable or toxic odours associated with he application of the finish.

The building of a staircase is an art that demands an attention to detail that only a professional can bring. Choose your contractor wisely.

There is also the option of buying a staircase already assembled in a factory. Then it's up to the handyman to put it in place.

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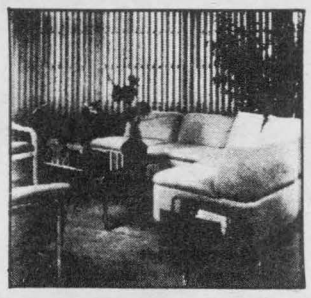


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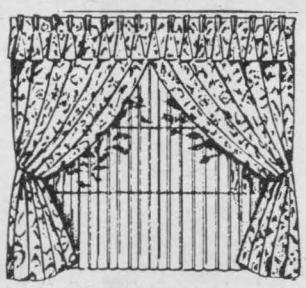
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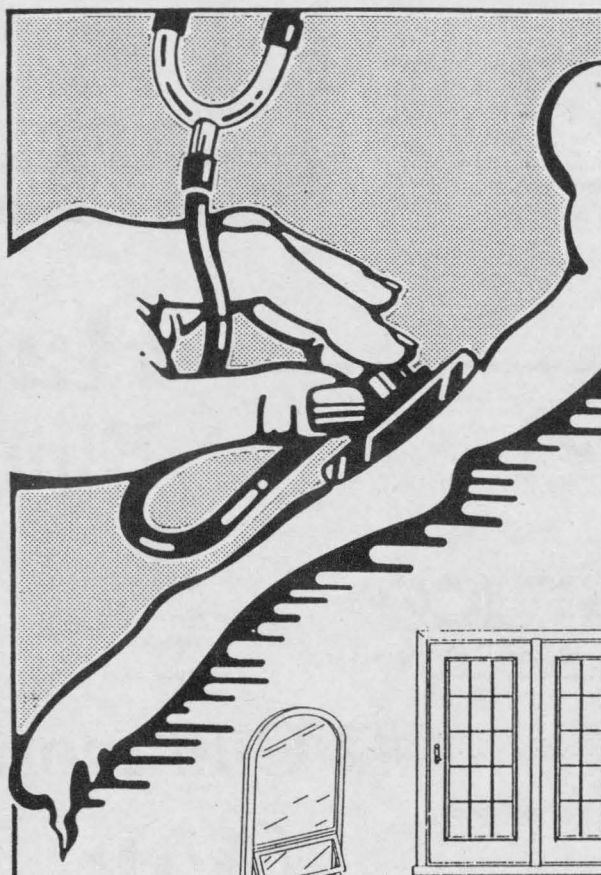
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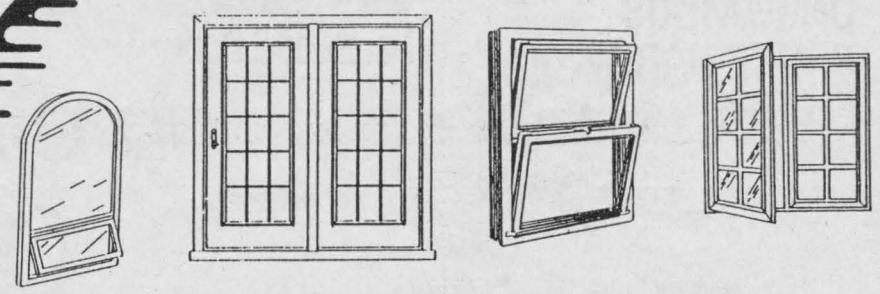
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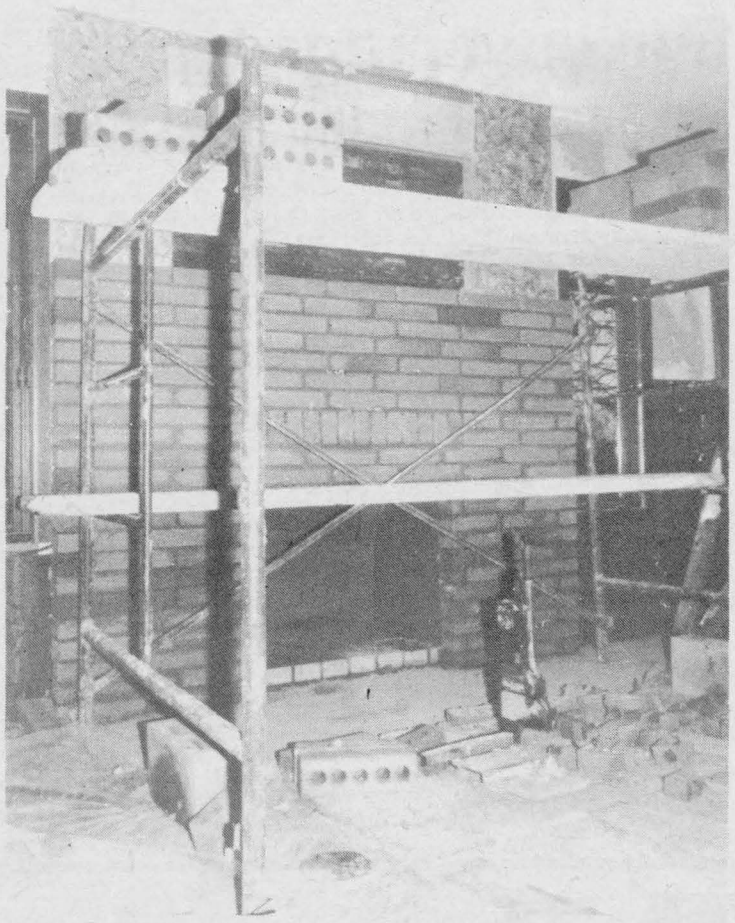
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Cosy touch

Fireplaces add a romantic atmosphere to any room. The smell of apple wood, the crackle in the hearth and the glow that the flames send into a room, cannot be matched. Today, the fireplace is making a statement and coming back into popularity. Once used as a functional necessity, to cook over and heat the home with, they are more for the cosy sensitive feeling they extrude. *Chieftain photo by S.L. Johnston*

Fireplace makes room inviting

Warmth is the key word this year in interior decorating.

And what gives a feeling of warmth more than a fireplace? There's nothing like a well-proportioned fireplace, emitting the glow of its flames to all parts of the room, to make a room warmly inviting.

As interior design fashion moves from contemporary to old fashioned, fireplace design has had to adapt.

The first question to answer when looking for a fireplace is whether you want to heat your body or your heart. If heating is your primary consideration then you should choose a controlled-combustion fireplace.

If pleasure of sitting in front of an open fire is your only consideration then there are other types of fireplaces from which to choose. Criteria to remember are efficiency, safety, durability, appearance and the environment when choosing a fireplace unit.

If you like to look at the flame of a fire but really don't like lighting it, it might make more sense to buy a gas fireplace with ceramic logs. It will provide the atmosphere but not the crackle and smell of a real fire.

Choose your wood carefully for best results this winter

Whether you have a fireplace or a woodstove, you need wood to keep them burning. You should choose your wood carefully so there won't be any disagreeable surprises when it comes time to use it.

The first consideration is the greenness of the wood. Wood that is too green provides a poorer energy return. It doesn't burns well and leads to a rapid accumulation of creosote deposits in the chimney.

When buying wood ask when the logs were cut and split. It is better to choose logs from a cord piled in a single line. They will be drier. If they have been left out in the open, sheltered of course from the rain.

There are a few things to look for to recognize wood that is dry enough to burn well. It will be splitting at the ends. It will be lighter than a greener piece of wood of the same type and dimension. It will likely be rather greyish looking.

If you only want a fire that gives off a lively flame, it's better to use softer wood. On the other hand, if the wood is being used mainly to heat your house then a hard wood will burn for a much longer time.

It's also possible to choose a combination of both types of wood. As soft wood is easier to et started, it can be used first. Then hard wood can be used later, particularly overnight.

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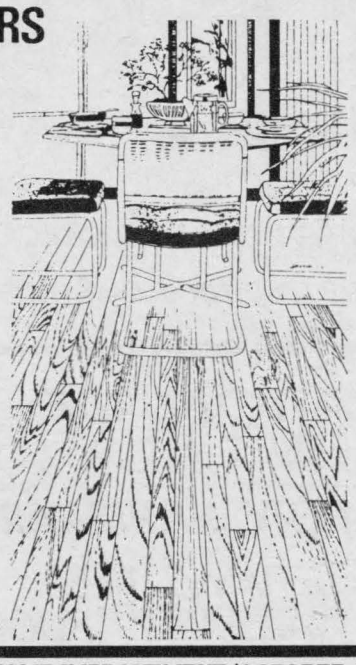
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Bruce hardwood floors
A division of Triangle Pacific Corp.

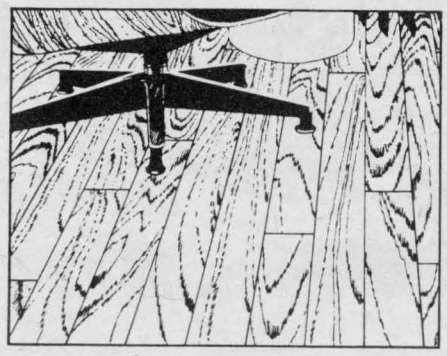
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#2 Common Oak

Unfinished 3/4 x 2 1/4 $1.49 Sq. Ft.

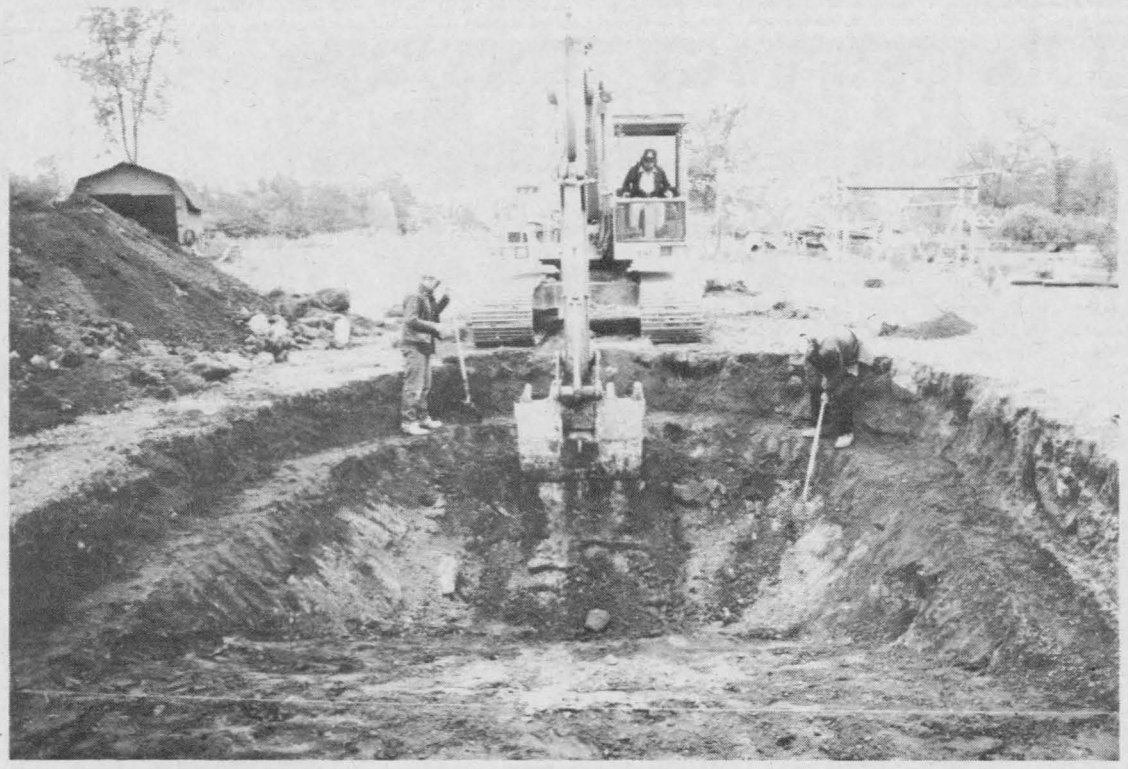
Bruce Prefinished Hardwood Flooring Means Easy Care



From $3.49 Sq. Ft.

KBC

Kemptville Building Centre Ltd.
Hwy 43 west of Kemptville Mall
258-6000



In the beginning

A pool can add many pleasurable hours to leisure time as a family unit. Once installed, the task of landscaping can be quite imposing...take your time and plan well before striking into the ground. Professionals are there to help and drawing plans can let you see how the completed project will fit into the overall scheme. Check with local government concerning fencing etc. as well.

Chieftain photo by S.L. Johnston

Children's rooms make their own fashion statement

Children's rooms make their own fashion statement. They are soft and tender for babies, romantic little girls and robust for little boys. Teenagers' rooms tend to reflect the personalities of their inhabitants.

Furniture in children's rooms is usually white because that makes it adaptable to any decoration. Wallpaper borders are used extensively in children's rooms, complementing almost any design.

Soft and tender colours are traditionally used in rooms renovated for newborns. White is a standard colour, and it can be married to peach, pink, lavender, lilac, aquamarine or peppermint green, the colours that are presently the most fashionable.

Two or three of these colours can be mixed to make an elegant combination. Lilac and lavender go well together, as do pink and aquamarine. The choice of a wallpaper border is an important factor in bringing together the different shades.

Fabric is being used more often as a decorating addition to soften the outlines of a window, or to add a tender touch above a crib.

Traditionally, little girls have preferred pink as their favourite colour, but it's best to consider the interests of the child you're decorating for.If pink is used it is usually a little deeper shade of pink than that used in a baby's room.Often a pale blue shade of lilac or aquamarine is added in a pattern where pink remains dominant. Here again wallpaper borders can be used as a unifying element.

Children are more willing to accept a mix of colours. Sometimes touches of a darker colour such as red can be added to a room where pink and pale blue or green are the major shades.

Little boys might prefer vivid colours: strong reds, intense greens, fresh blues and sunny yellows. Sometimes a little grey can be added but never enough to eclipse the dominant bright colours.

Teenagers are attracted to more classic and darker shades. Examples are green, blue and deep purple.There is also a trend for some teenagers to want black for their rooms.

Uncovering the secrets of paint

Can you imagine anything less exciting than watching paint dry? While it may seem to be the ultimate in boring activities, studying how paint dries can help us do several things. It can help understand why your last house paint job didn't last as long as you'd hoped. It can also help develop more environmentally friendly paints. The secret in both cases lies in understanding how the liquid paint mixture that you apply to a surface turns into a hard, weather resistant solid coating.

Prof. Mitch Winnik, one of the researchers supported by the Ontario Centre for Material Research, has turned watching paint dry into an exciting and award winning scientific pursuit by making special chemical probes that follow the paint drying process. A latex paint formulation typically consists of latex particles (small spheres of plastic), pigments, and various processing chemicals all suspended in water as the carrying medium. When the paint is applied, the water evaporates, leaving the latex particles to "cure" into a tough film. Prof. Winnik makes latex particles that are tagged with light sensitive units - some that absorb and re-emit light, others that dampen the response from the first group. He mixes the two types of tagged latex and then paints a surface. By shining light on the surface as it dries, the interaction of the two groups tells a story of how the different particles are coalescing and curing into a single dry film. If the two groups are seen to be poorly mixed the paint film may have microscopic cracks - which may spell early deterioration of the coating.

Various additives to make the two groups of tagged latex mix well can be investigated to improve this performance. The current drive to reduce our use of oil based paints for environmental reasons means that water based latex paints must be used in an increasing range of applications - automobile coatings for example. Prof. Winnik's studies are showing how this can be done while retaining the high quality of paint coating that we expect.

The Print Measurement Bureau has found that you are one of 55.9% of all Canadians that read community newspapers. Be sure that you get yours each and every week!

Preparing your home for winter

Cleaning out the garage, putting away summer clothes, and buying school supplies are all signs that fall is near.

Now is a good time to weatherproof your home and yard.

As most homeowners know, cracks and leaks around the outside of the house let in cold air and allow warm air to escape. This sends heating bills soaring during the cold winter months. Cracks in concrete driveways, steps and patios can expand when attached by ice, snow and freezing rain. A small investment of time and energy can help avoid these problems.

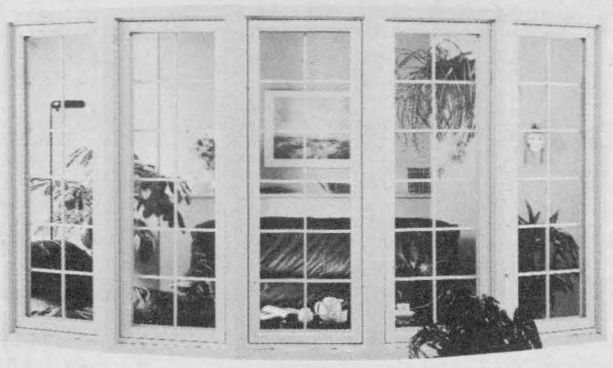
To begin the weatherproofing process, check windows and door frames for cracking or splitting. Clean the surfaces to be repaired and then using a wire brush, to roughen them.

Another area where cracks frequently appear is around outside wall faucets. With the same caulk, you can repair the area around and behind the faucet. This compound can be applied to damp as well as dry surfaces.

The "experts" suggest using a good quality caulk to seal the leaks. Caulk is an elastic, adhesive material that can be squeezed from a tube or pushed out of a cartridge with a caulk gun.

To fill a crack, push the caulking tube along the crack with its angled opening running fairly flat along the surface. To stop the flow, twist the gun slightly as you disengage. Allow the area to dry for about one half an hour and then use latex or oil-based paint over the caulk.

CLEAR CUT
SATISFACTION



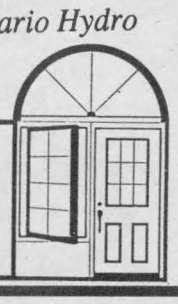
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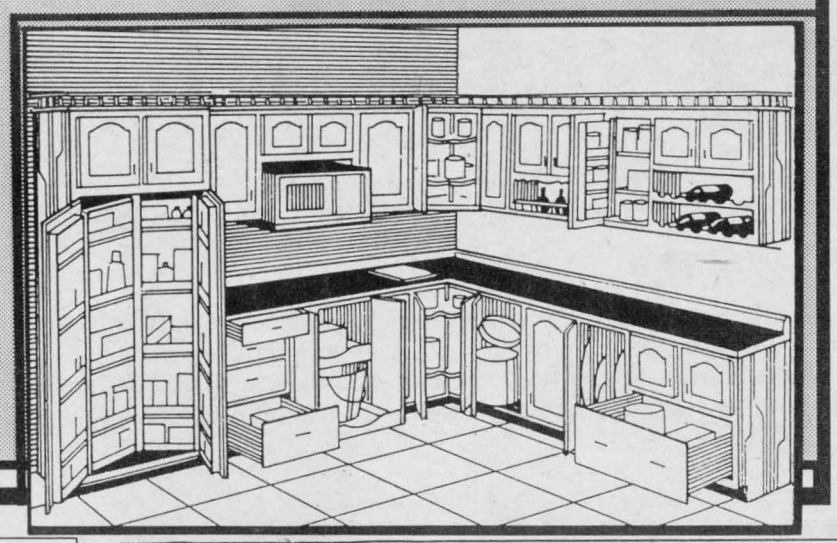
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Athens

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Tremonte Royale
The smooth, velvety texture of saxony plush. Made of 100% BCF nylon, which won't fuzz or shed. Plus StainShield™ for optimum stain resistance, and our famous 5-year warranty.

Richmond™ carpet

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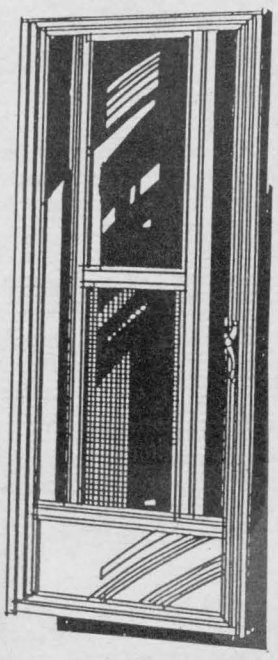
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