

Home alarms: know the options

Herald Special
The increased sophistication of electronics and the continued threats of residential theft and fire have brought new home security systems on the market. The alarms can protect family and property, Paul Tuz, president of the Better Business Bureau, believes, but be sure to know the options before making a buying decision.

While common sense actions like a well-lighted home can deter some thieves, a reliable alarm system can go even further.

Types of Burglar Alarms: There are many mechanisms to choose among, including:

—Switch sensors—which attach to doors or windows and trigger an alarm when tampered with;

—Pressure mats—used to protect specific areas or possessions; these are hidden under a carpet and activate when stepped upon;

—Ultrasonic motion detectors—these emit an inaudible sound wave pattern, which trips an alarm when disturbed by an intruder;

—Infrared photoelectric sensors—a light beamed between two points, usually at an entry, which sets off an alarm when the beam is interrupted.

Also decide whether a burglar alarm system will be local or remote. The former only signals at or near the home. Its aim is to frighten away the burglar or alert neighbors to call the police. A remote alarm sends a pre-recorded message or signal through telephone lines to a designated security company, neighbor or relative. In few areas today do police allow these automatic alarms to alert them directly, because of the frequency of false alarms.

Smoke detectors are generally less complex

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than burglar alarms and most models now on the market are designed to allow the homeowner to install them easily. Those purchasing burglar alarms or combination burglar-smoke alarm systems might consider having them installed by professionals. They may be able to minimize the wiring needed and place the sensors most effectively,

taking into account any unusual architectural features in the home.

A Word On Costs: While a good smoke detector can be obtained for about \$25, a burglar alarm system can range in price from several hundred dollars to thousands. In addition, a remote alarm system can involve a monthly service fee. It's worthwhile to get price quotes on the equip-

ment and the installation. Also consider leasing versus buying, to learn which option is better.

Mr. Tuz says not to fall prey to scare tactics aimed at selling more than is necessary. However, he says if the system is being professionally installed, a purchaser may want to wire the home based on the most ambitious plans for security, even if other

components are not added until later.

For assurance in buying a quality product, verify that it has been approved by a major testing lab, such as Underwriters Laboratories Canada (ULC). ULC checks the products for both electrical safety and performance. To determine if the installer is reliable, contact the Better Business

Bureau and check on the company's past service record.

Before signing a contract, discuss and understand how the installation and maintenance of the system will be performed. Learn what the sensors will look like, where they will be placed and whether the wiring will be concealed or exposed.

Mr. Tuz advises that the

contract should list the points of protection and itemize the equipment to be installed. It should include all service obligations and the specifics of any warranty. By following these steps, a homeowner will not only decrease the chances of property loss and increase peace of mind, but also will obtain a reliable security system.

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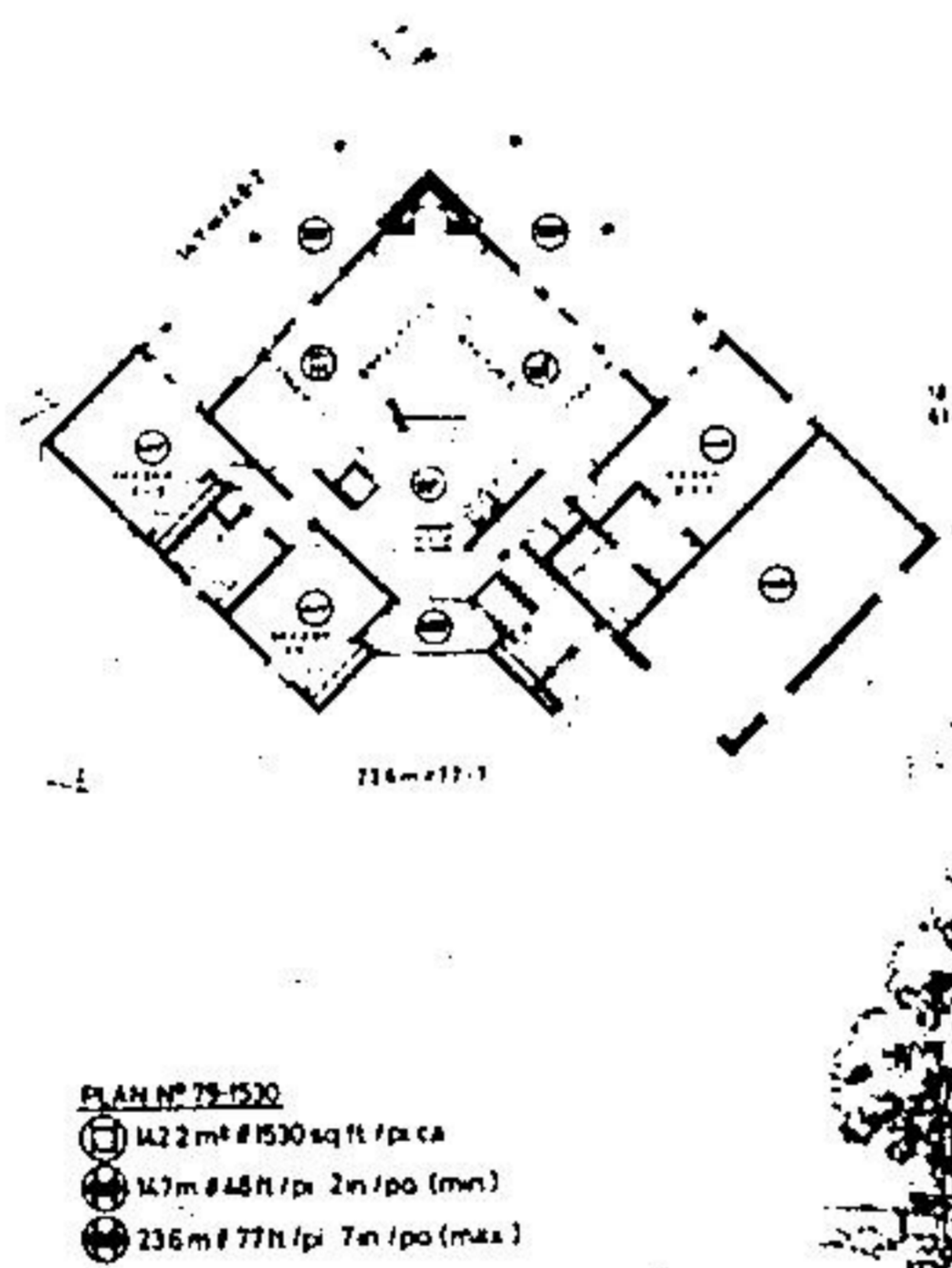
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OPEN-PLAN SPLIT ENTRY HOME HAS ISLAND KITCHEN

Here's a smartly traditional three bedroom home design of the split entry type which is perfectly suited to the medium frontage residential building lot, and which provides in excess of 1,500 square feet of finished floor area, for present use, and as great an amount of space available on the unfinished lower level, for future development and finishing. The solid and comfortable-appearing exterior presents an impressive facade finished in horizontal channel siding and fieldstone veneer, with fieldstone chimney and heavy shake roof. The masonry traditional impression of the exterior is reinforced by the small-paned windows, front-facing, spindle-railed balcony and barn motif accents on the entry and single-car garage doors.

The weather-sheltered main entry leads into a compact reception foyer and outerwear storage area, from which twin staircases lead either down to the unfinished lower level, or up to the main living area. The latter opens into a short hallway, which leads traffic to the right and into the large and open living-dining room combination; or left, into the large island kitchen area. The living room features a corner-positioned, cantilevered-hearth masonry fireplace and sliding glass doors opening onto the wraparound rear patio.

The interesting and functional island kitchen affords an excellent step-saving work triangle, generous countertop work surfaces and abundant cupboard storage. A wide pass-through provides easy access to the large snack bar counter on the dining room side. This pass-through could easily be repeated on the living room side, and a wet bar established for those who entertain a great deal.

The spacious dining area provides for the installation of built-in china storage facilities and a formal dining room suite. It features sliding glass doors to the wraparound balcony, for easy access to outdoor dining in fine weather.

The large master bedroom suite is accessible from the living room; and is well-separated from the two secondary bedrooms, for freedom from disturbance. It features a double walk-through closet and a three-piece ensuite bathroom with tub, as well as

sliding glass doors leading onto the wraparound balcony. Both secondary bedrooms have generous closet storage facilities and excellent exposure for view, ventilation and natural light. The rear-facing bedroom has a sliding door access to the balcony, while the front-facing unit has access through the hallway to the front balcony. Sliding glass doors could easily be installed, making this balcony semi-private for the greater convenience of the second bedroom occupant.

The unfinished lower level had a roughed-in masonry fireplace and roughed-in plumbing for the development of a downstairs bathroom. The lower level offers abundant space for the future development of additional bedrooms or recreational facilities such as a family room, recreation room/wet bar or whatever combination suits specific individual requirements.

This is an excellent home design, affording maximum flexibility and adaptability to individual family needs. The abundant glass area and wraparound rear-facing balcony make the design a particularly good choice for the family which has acquired a building lot with a natural panorama to the rear.

Plans for design No. 79-1530 may be purchased either by the single set, at a cost of \$130.00 for the first set and \$28.00 for each additional set, or by the package. A five-set plan package, including the first set, is economically priced at \$185.00 and an eight-set package, also including the first set, is only \$225.00.

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