

There's lots of options to fixing your driveway

When you pull into your driveway, do you feel like you're on an obstacle course, dodging holes, bumps and heaving cracks? Has your driveway become so drab with age and neglect that it's an eyesore?

If you answered yes to these two questions, you may want to park up your drive by resurfacing or replacing it altogether. You'll find a revamped driveway can be do wonders for the overall appearance and value of your home.

There are a number of attractive options to choose from when considering paving, including asphalt, concrete, loose fill, and brick. Turf blocks (hollow cement blocks containing grass) can also be used to create a lawn-like effect.

Many homeowners are now installing interlocking brick to give their driveway a distinctive, stately look that offers more colour and texture than some of the more traditional paving.

When revamping or replacing your driveway, keep in mind the larger your driveway is, the more it will cost you to maintain it. Also try to avoid putting new sections too close to existing trees and shrubs.

Pavement should be slightly sloped as well, to make sure water runs off. There should also be a slope across the width, so water does not pond. This can be achieved by raising the centre a bit so the water rolls off both sides.

Asphalt: The most common and popular material used for driveways is asphalt. If properly installed and maintained, this black surface can give you many years of reliable service.

But keep in mind that it radiates a lot of heat in the summer. Damage can occur from frost and oil leaks. It may also become gouged easily from sharp objects like bicycle kickstands and ladders.

A poor installation job will result in fairly quick deterioration and fading. Make sure you hire professionals to do the job. A sturdy gravel sub-base must be installed for new asphalt driveways or those that are being replaced.

Any future cracks and holes in asphalt can be fixed with special driveway sealer and patching material sold at your local hardware store.

It is recommended a sealer be applied about every two to three years, to compensate for wear and tear.

Loose Fill: Loose fill is another type of paving and consists of gravel (usually crushed limestone), or pebbles. It is generally not as expensive as other paving, but may be harder to keep clear of weeds and yard debris.

A gravel or pebble drive may also be more difficult to maintain in winter months because the stones have a tendency to get mixed with snow and become displaced as the driveway is being shovelled. Stones and

pebbles can also become dislodged by your car tires as you pull in and out of your driveway every day.

However, a loose fill driveway can provide an attractive contrast to adjacent lawns and flowerbeds. It can also provide a very good base for a future asphalt or concrete driveway.

Concrete: Concrete is another paving option. It can be more expensive than other driveway materials, but can withstand a lot of weight, is extremely durable and doesn't require a lot of upkeep.

Made up of cement, aggregate and water, concrete is a good substance for a driveway containing curves and corners. Installation of a concrete driveway is not an easy task and should be left to professionals. A solid sub-surface must be in place before the concrete can be added.

If you plan to resurface an old concrete driveway, make sure you patch any cracks or holes before applying the new material.

Brick: Brick, particularly the interlocking variety, is a popular option, to more traditional paving. Bricks can be laid in a number of interesting patterns, and many colours are available.

Although bricks are more expensive than traditional paving, many homeowners enjoy the appearance of a brick driveway and the numerous patterns that can be used to create a distinctive look.

As with other types of paving, a good sub-base is necessary before the bricks can be laid.

□ This article is provided by local realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

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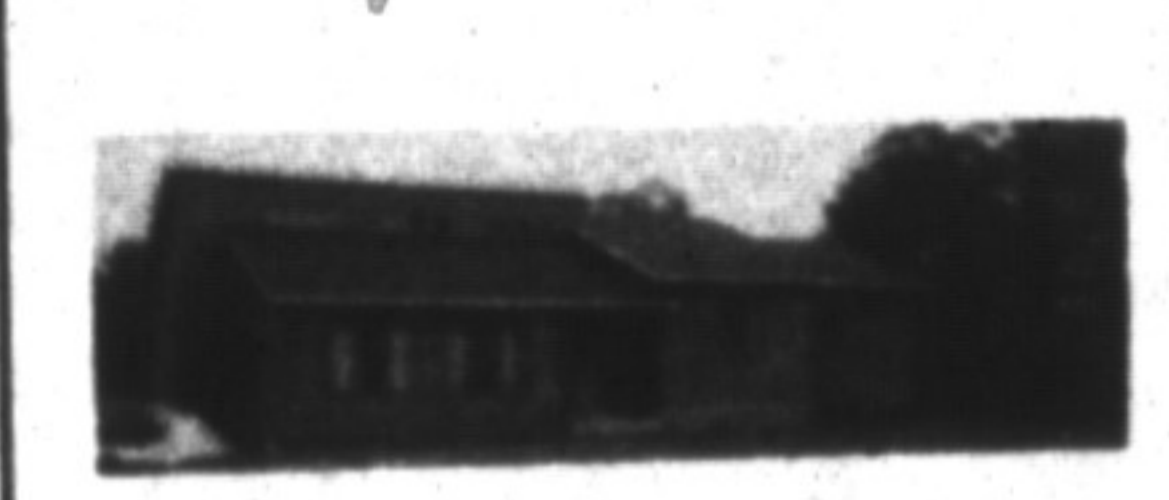
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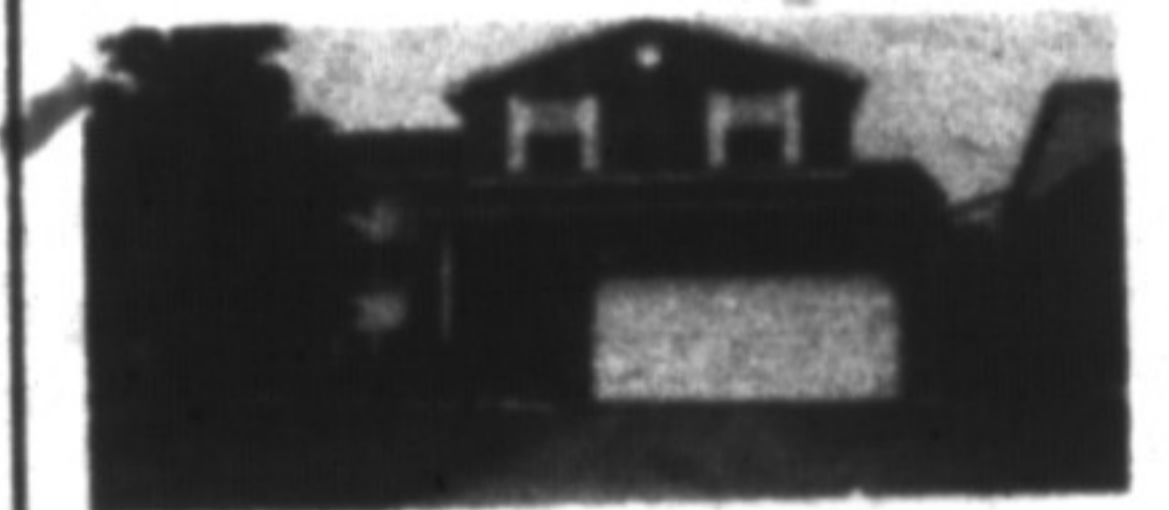
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