

Insulation important all year round

By NANCY HOSKIN

Making sure that your home is well insulated for the summer is possibly more critical than insulating against the winter months, according to Les Knox.

Les and Kent Knox own and operate The Insulation People. Located in Markham, the father-son team specialize in insulation, roofing and window installation, with over 43 years combined experience.

"If you added up all the cracks and holes in the average Canadian house, you would essentially be taking a one inch square out of the front door," said Kent Knox.

These cracks and crevices are caused by poor workmanship, the expansion and contraction of the property and settling of the ground that the home is situated on.

There are just as many tips we can look at with insulating our homes against warm summer temperatures as for the winter.

Doors, windows and baseboards should be properly sealed. Whether or not you have air conditioning, you will want to keep the cooler temperatures indoors. There are several products on the market recommended for this; Inviroseal, by Tremco, which seals gaps that allow air to leave a house; Silicon, though it is not paintable; and Seal Caulk, made by Parlastic, which is paintable within 24 hours of applying.

With temperatures reaching up to 130 degrees F in your attic and the cool air pushing its way through the pipes at 60 degrees, many times it becomes a futile proposition to cool your home, especially to do it with efficiency

cost wise, if the pipes and attic space is not substantially protected with insulation.

"If you have central air conditioning with pipes running through the attic, the ducting should be properly covered with fiberglass batts or top with an R28 (the R number is the resistance) factor. Insulation should be banked around pipes and blown in between pipes for the best results," Kent Knox said.

A do-it-yourself insulating project, which may make for a good spring time job, is the application of a new product called Fiberwall. Recently introduced in Canada, Fiberwall insulates as well as decorates. The end result looks and feels like wallpaper, but Fiberwall is mixed together in a pail and applied like paint.

You can either roll it on, use a trowel or have it professionally sprayed on. It has to be applied to the wall closest to the heat source. It not only insulates, but is sound proof and comes in a large variety of colors. It adheres to any surface whether rough dry wall or a previously oil painted surface without any preparation.

An advantage to Fiberwall is that it is repairable, unlike wallpaper when you rip it or stain it there really isn't too much that can be done. Extra Fiberwall can be placed in the freezer and when it is needed to patch a tear it can be re-applied and the area done cannot be noticed. The product costs \$1 a sq. ft., with one box covering 36 sq. ft.

Another do-it-yourself project to save on summer fuel bills is the

installation of a set back thermostat for your air conditioning system. Why pay to cool your house while you're at work during the day? Pre-set the temperature so that the cool air comes on a half an hour before you arrive home.

Sunlight can also cause higher utility bills in the summer. Windows can be protected by window quilts which act as a blind to deflect the sunlight.

If you are building a new home or contemplating replacing any windows you might look into triple glazed windows.

"Double glazed windows mean a 10 per cent savings in utility bills for both the winter and summer, while triple glazed windows can mean up to a 45 per cent savings in the summer months," added Les Knox.

ly homes that are over 15 years old are solid brick and again aren't suitable for adding insulation into the outside walls. Now brick veneer is being used on many newer homes with a four inch cavity and some insulation already in place. More can be blown in for further utility bill savings. Frame houses have a good cavity space to put in plenty of insulation.

Besides the savings on fuel bills for both summer and winter many people have extra insulation installed for sound proofing, especially for the common walls in semi-detached homes, noise due to living in a high traffic area and a simple problem, to avoid hearing the music blaring from teenagers radios and stereos that happen to also be situated under the same roof as you!

"I think the market may be better for the homeowner contemplating the addition of insulation from professional companies. We'll have a more natural market. Retrofitting work done during the course of the program has caused an artificial market, both in demand and in price," commented Les Knox.

Local contractors did the job

(from D-1)

"I wanted to use a local company, not only to boost local business but to have them nearby in case of a problem," said Mr. Langford.

All three prices were within \$1,500 of each other and all within two weeks. Only one contractor quoted to the exact drawings, adding few extras and presenting a fully itemized written quote, another quoted with the exclusion of the proposed masonry fireplace, as the third contractor did, including, instead, an insert fireplace.

Eight of Langford's drawings, transferred to blueprint paper with the contractors name on it, were approved by the city's building department. He had drawn almost an identical reversal of the front of the home.

"One of the main problems we had in dealing with the city, was the fact that there doesn't seem to be a check list for all the things you have to do and which department needs to be dealt with," said Mr. Langford.

Money is always of prime importance when beginning any addition. Costs vary, depending on the project, and there are always extras.

"When you make the decision to add onto an existing structure nothing is guaranteed, there are always added expenses you didn't plan for. They're going to pop up, so if you realize it early on they won't aggravate you as much," said Mr. Langford.

The building permit, which took over 10 weeks to obtain, cost the Langfords \$500. A deposit to the Hydro Commission for a heat loss

calculation was required next and is refunded when they inspect the placement of the heaters.

The Building Department in Markham will retain a \$1,000 deposit, refunded when the re-grading of the property is complete and the acreage is sodded and seeded.

Held for over a year now, because it was impossible to meet the requirements due to the impending winter, the Langford's deposit from the \$1,000 will be returned this summer.

In building their addition the Langfords added extra touches to further its authenticity. The main attraction is the family room fireplace. The interior is made from reclaimed brick and the exterior made from hand-formed bricks, purchased from Toronto Brick, the only Ontario company left in

existence that doesn't use molds.

The fireplace mantle came from an old barn on the Larkin Farm in Markham. Originally 15 ft. long the rough wood beam was sized to fit nearly from wall to wall.

The master bedroom fireplace enhances the beauty of the Victorian styled room. Designed around an antique mantle, the hearth was to be made of marble, instead a pink-gray granite accents the dark wood and rose decor of the room.

Though the beams in the bedroom are not old they are custom made of solid pine and are incorporated as part of the structure.

Antique and flea markets were searched for the little extras that make the difference for a realistic atmosphere, from furniture to fireplace tools.

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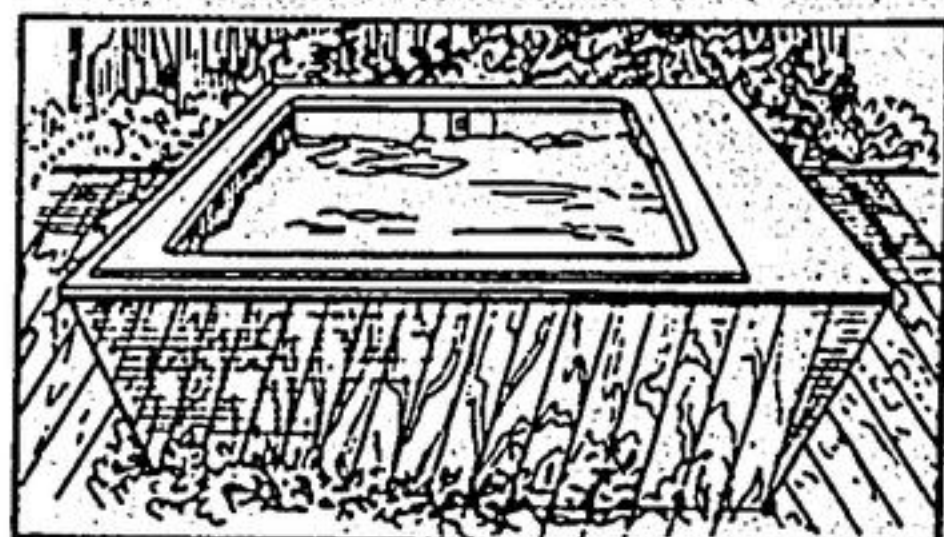
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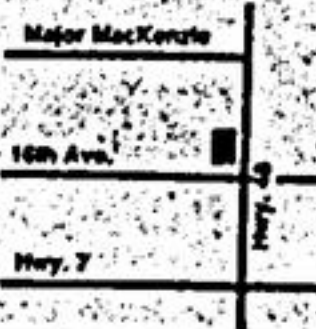
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