

ISSUE 18 2018
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initiatives emerging
around the world

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for the mind,
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trends

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coming your way

Materials
matter

There's more to cladding
than just aesthetics

HOW TO GET
THE ULTIMATE
BACKYARD

**THE SUSTAINABLE
HOME CHECKLIST**

Going green doesn't
have to cost the earth



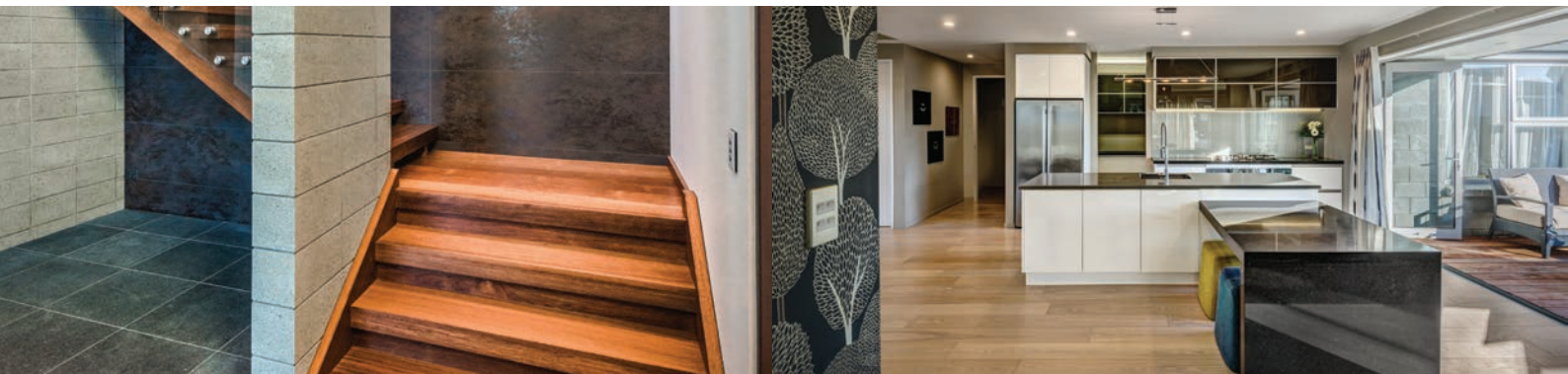
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Lifestyle block owners keen to protect environment

Swannanoa couple Daniel and Michelle Power have gained a fresh insight into good management practices for their lifestyle block.

The couple were part of a recent pilot project on lifestyle blocks, run by the Waimakariri Water Zone Committee. There are around 4500 lifestyle blocks in Waimakariri, and while they don't have a big impact on water quality, they do have an impact on the environment.

The couple attended workshops which included animal welfare, riverside planting, waterways, pasture growth, feed requirements as well as fertiliser use.

Daniel says they were pleased to have the opportunity to participate and would encourage other lifestyle block owners to join future workshops.

"We were both surprised at how much we got out of it and we could easily keep going every week. Sharing knowledge is really the key to growing and developing new skills."

Meeting other lifestyle block owners and talking about lifestyle block issues was another bonus for the couple.

"It's great to take the time to really look at what you're doing and to have the opportunity to meet regularly with other lifestyle block owners. Even though we're a small drop in the bucket, everything counts when it comes to the environment.

"We also found it really useful to be able to bounce ideas off each other and to learn more from other lifestyle block owners living in the area."

Daniel and Michelle were reassured to discover that their regular soil testing programme is helping them make the best use of their 20-acre block.

"Knowing that we're on the right track is really helpful. It was also interesting to learn more about nitrogen loss and irrigation."

The couple have taken their current good management skills to the next level by putting what they learned at the workshops into action.

"One thing we're doing differently now is graphing all of our soil test results so we can see if there are any trends developing over time."

“Doing the soil testing is something everyone can do and it makes sense because it gives you the facts you need to make decisions about what to use on your land.”

For Daniel and Michelle, soil testing saves money by showing if fertiliser is needed.

"Having the evidence to back up your actions is really important. There's no point wasting money by applying fertiliser when you don't need to and it's better for the environment too."

The couple are firm believers in environmental responsibility.

"One of the main reasons we moved out here was because of the lifestyle it provides for our family.

"Being able to show our children how to take care of the land, grow their own vegetables and raise animals is really valuable."

They hope that all land owners will reflect on the impact they are having on the environment, whether they have a small block or a large farm.

"It's important for all of us to take responsibility for the environment as we want to protect it for future generations."



Being sustainable is one of the goals for the Power family, who take real pride in producing their own eggs, vegetables and meat.

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Cover image: An Arrowtown home styled by the team at Melanie Craig Design.
www.melaniecraigdesign.co.nz

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If you're looking for a durable and affordable solid-surface benchtop that exudes style and sophistication, look no further than Prime Kitchens' contemporary range of Lucino benchtops, in a stunning range of colours.

High-End Quality Meets Affordability

Offering the luxury appearance of stone, marble or granite, Prime Kitchens' gorgeous Lucino solid-surface benchtop range is one of their most popular products – providing a more durable, watertight finish and seamless appearance at a price point comparable with lower quality alternatives such as laminate.

Designed to Stand the Test of Time

Solid surface benchtops are now a hugely popular option among style-conscious homeowners – but it's vital you choose the RIGHT product if you want your new benchtop to stand the test of time.

Lucino 30-millimetre thick benchtops are available in a spectacular range of styles and colour tones. Made from quality materials, the Lucino range is affordable and easy to repair when necessary.



Unlike thinner solid surface alternatives, which are built-up to offer a thick appearance, Lucino benchtops are solid right through – ensuring your benchtop is watertight and built to last.

Introducing THREE NEW On-Trend Colours

The Lucino range is now available in nine stunning colours to complement your kitchen design and interior style – including three brand new styles launched for 2018.

Choose from Lucino in classic Glacier, Caesar, Concrete, Marble, Pebble or Snowflake, or opt for one of the newest on-trend colours – Empora, Roman and White – which have been handpicked by the Prime Kitchens design team for style and serviceability.

Whether you love minimalism and simplicity, or you're looking to create a kitchen ambience exuding a softer, down-to-earth sophistication, there is a Lucino benchtop colour to suit your style.

Exclusive to Prime Kitchens

Prime Kitchens is the only kitchen design and manufacture specialist in New Zealand to offer the Lucino solid-surface benchtop range, and utilise the latest technology to achieve a seamless finish.

To view model kitchens showcasing the Lucino range, pop in and visit the Christchurch or Queenstown showrooms, or contact the team to book your FREE 60 minute design consultation.

Showroom on 9 Klondyke Drive is open to view Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:00pm



What's hiding in your carpet?

By Natalia Rietveld

How often do you get your carpets cleaned? Did you know you are meant to give them a deep-clean every 12-18 months at least? Those with pets and children should be doing it more frequently.

Keeping your house clean and healthy shouldn't be seen as a luxury, but an American survey conducted by the Institution of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) found that most people saw it that way, or at least as something that wasn't entirely necessary.

Of those surveyed only 50 percent had their carpets deep-cleaned yearly and even less (34 percent)

had them done biannually – recommended for those with children and pets.

What's lurking among the fibres isn't something we often think about. But if you consider the dirty feet, food, pet hair, muddy little fingers and bugs that are stomped into the carpets on an often-daily basis, it should come as no surprise that vacuuming alone doesn't quite do the trick.



Over time the hidden nasties begin to accumulate. Dust mites, though harmless on their own, create a large amount of microscopic excrement which can cause a number of respiratory problems. If that hasn't got you ordering a steam clean, bed bugs, skin flakes and

allergens are also commonplace in an uncleaned carpet.

If it has been a while since your carpets have had a deep-clean don't be fooled by their appearance – often looking clean doesn't mean they actually are. For the good of your health and your family's keep on top of it, don't treat it like a luxury.

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Lifestyles

By Lydia Truesdale



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Creating a true urban environment

The inner city of Christchurch is making great progress in rebuilding since the earthquake devastated it in 2011.

Yes, there are those that still say it is too slow, but the challenges have been immense from finding funds – how to pay for it all, availability of resources, bureaucratic hurdles, and trying to envisage what a new 21st century city in New Zealand will be like.

Out of all the confusion and complexity, a wonderful new place is emerging.

With The Terrace project almost open, soon you will be able to walk along a beautifully developing riverfront, past the earthquake memorial and the stunning new riverside buildings through The Terrace development, then into the retail precinct of the

BNZ Centre, ANZ Centre, The Crossing, Stranges Lane and the Innovation Precinct beyond, with short detours along the way to Ballantynes and the soon-to-be built Farmers Market.

With the new library, convention centre and Spark building underway, the Square will begin its revival. The Town Hall, Theatre Royal and The Piano are exciting new and revamped performance spaces for entertainment.

The very large cinema multiplex, well under construction, opposite the completed bus exchange with the inner-city supermarket nearby, is fast-becoming another real urban hub.



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Christchurch is turning into a real city again with the pieces all starting to fall into place.

One essential component is lagging behind though - which is inner city housing.

There are good examples emerging – the Atlas Quarter is one and the East Frame housing is also finally underway, but it is challenging.

Land costs, construction costs, providing good quality affordable housing that will not become future slums, are all difficult issues to resolve.

The city though, is becoming a vibrant urban environment and there is a growing demand from people wanting to be part of it – to live the type of city lifestyle that is so appealing in other parts of the world.

There is also demand at the upper end of the market for high-end luxury apartments.

There is one high-end apartment tower well under construction now in Armagh Street. A nine level, 14 apartment, 30-meter-high tower, being built to an exceptionally high standard, designed by Sheppard & Rout Architects.

It will be New Zealand's first base-isolated, purely residential apartment high rise.



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Grand designs

The tower essentially sits on lead / rubber bearings that provide shock absorption between the ground and the apartments.

It is designed for differential movement between the earth and building of almost half a meter. A significant earthquake that shakes the ground should only be minimally transferred to the tower.

This leading edge earthquake resisting technology, which was originally developed in New Zealand, has already

been adopted for a number of office buildings and hospitals in Christchurch.

The use of this in the places people live is an exciting next step. This means the apartment building will be a very secure and safe place to live in Christchurch's earthquake-prone environment.

It is not the only earthquake-resisting technology available and other methods are also being implemented to ensure



we have a resilient building stock for the future.

This construction of buildings that are safe and perceived to be safe is an essential part of Christchurch's healing and revival.

The hope is that these apartments and others will set a trend for the construction of more quality residential apartments, as well as affordable housing within the inner city, turning Christchurch

into a true urban environment where people can live, work and play together.

A city we can all be proud of.

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Future building solutions

By Lydia Truesdale

When building for the future, especially on a city-wide scale like Christchurch is experiencing, it pays to ensure the solutions you adopt aren't about to be replaced, outdated or made obsolete through new legislation; and there are some pretty exciting initiatives emerging across the world.

What are the frontrunners? Sustainability is the new normal and technology and prefab the big players in that.

Technology

The advancements and increasingly widespread implementation of technologies such as building information modelling (BIM), virtual reality (VR), drones and 3D models continue to transform the way projects are designed, built and experienced.

Technology solves the inherent issues construction faces prior in the conference room, instead of as they happen in the field.

The main concerns surrounding technologies are based on the fear that automation supersedes human capabilities, but rather than resulting in job cuts, automation in buildings looks likely to be a job creator.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Work report noted that, when looking at installation and maintenance jobs, the role

"will see great productivity enhancements and strong growth in green jobs such as the installation, retrofitting, repair and maintenance of smart meters and renewable energy technologies in residential and office buildings, but – at an aggregate level – will also come face-to-face with the efficiency-saving and labour-substituting aspect of the Internet of Things".

In essence, staff in IT and facility management roles will need adapt but not change course, in that they will spend less time finding problems and more time fixing them.

Prefabrication

Prefabrication refers to any part of a building that is made off site.

Prefab and new technologies together achieve a better built environment – higher quality, smarter, greener, safer, faster, more innovative and efficient building solutions.

So what are other countries' solutions?

Australia

The modular classroom movement in Australia is gaining momentum, primarily due to it making possible access to high-quality classrooms in regional areas that don't have the skilled labour for conventional site construction.

Further benefits of factory built include improved worker safety, removing the risk of delays due to bad weather, and a better working environment, resulting in a higher quality build.

“

We're basically taking just a complete mix of plastic out of the waste stream, then we're converting it into a useable aggregate for concrete.

”





“

will see great productivity enhancements and strong growth in green jobs such as the installation, retrofitting, repair and maintenance of smart meters and renewable energy technologies in residential and office buildings, but – at an aggregate level – will also come face-to-face with the efficiency-saving and labour-substituting aspect of the Internet of Things.

”



New-gen modular classrooms are bright, adaptable to different configurations, and well insulated against the elements and noise from outside. They also take into account thermal and acoustic performance as well as indoor environment quality to achieve a high-quality learning space.

Europe

Europe is a big player, with energy efficient building technology spending in Western and Eastern Europe expected to grow from \$83.5 billion in 2017 to \$111.9 billion in 2026.

Advancements in intelligent building technologies are evolving toward an integrated ecosystem of components and sensors that work together as a platform for optimising facility operations.

United States

Picture this: two towers of micro units soaring above Manhattan, connected by two platforms, with greenery running the height of the building and various landing pads affixed for flying cars.

That is firm Humphreys and Partners Architects' answer for addressing the big-city issues of affordable housing, lack of parking space and the need for sustainable architecture.

The apartments would be fitted with photovoltaic glass intended to reduce energy consumption by up to 34 percent.

Other sustainable elements in the building include wind turbines located under the upper platform connecting the two towers, which

would be used to power the homes; vertical farming; the use of solar panels; and the use of tidal power through the Hudson River. The base of the development would house an Amazon Go-type store and co-working spaces.

Hughes explained that the technology for much of this development is already in place, but that legislation hadn't yet caught up to allow for such a project.

Japan

Indicative of buildings trends of the future, the stadium for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the New National Stadium, is being heralded as unobtrusive and rather simple in its initial impression.

Multi-tiered but relatively squat, its roof unpeels to reveal a latticed wood framework, the forecourts dotted with trees, and the entire complex is hugged by parkland, pointedly emphasising its relationship with the natural landscape.

The building's 2,000 cubic meters of cedar and larch are said to come from every prefecture in Japan.

New Zealand

A Kiwi company believes it has come up with a solution to one of the world's biggest environmental problems.

Enviropiaz takes plastic waste and turns it into the building blocks of construction.

"We're basically taking just a complete mix of plastic out of the waste stream, then

we're converting it into a useable aggregate for concrete."

It's made from any mix of plastic and, unlike recycling, it doesn't have to be sorted or even cleaned. It goes through a thermo mechanical process which turns it into product they call Plazrok.

Similarly, ByFusion has developed technology that converts every type of waste plastic into an alternative, green building material called RePlast.

Getting creative: Getting paid for not using power

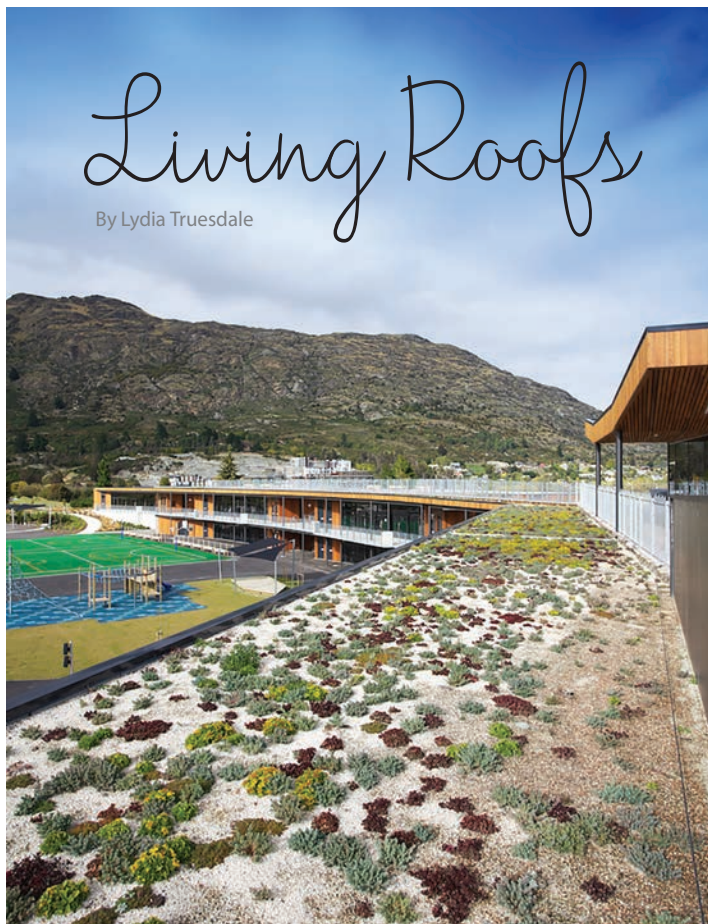
Imagine being paid for not consuming energy.

Lawrence Orsini, founder of LO3 Energy, suggests that getting paid for turning things off at the right times is just as easy as paying for electricity being generated at the right time.

LO3 builds local grids to help people with solar panels on their roofs supply neighbours with power. The challenge here is that power being generated at the grid edge – solar panels, smart appliances and other close-to-home sources – requires a different grid architecture.

Chief operating officer at Electron, Joanna Hubbard and her team are providing that flexibility by creating a trading platform intended to allow producers, consumers and start-ups to collaborate on generating and purchasing energy.

"All parties can pay less and deal more efficiently, ultimately lowering bills and carbon emissions," she said.



A global shift towards a more sustainable future is changing urban development as we know it. When it comes to roofing, are living or green roofs a permanent fixture of the future?

Living roofs are roofs partially or completely covered in vegetation typically found in coastal areas, semi-deserts or dry mountain landscapes.

They must have the correct waterproofing membrane, substrate and drainage layers to support plant life and protect the dwelling from erosion.

Not only do living roofs elevate the aesthetic appeal of the cityscape but they also bring much-needed biodiversity to cities dominated by concrete collages.

According to the International Green Roof Association there are four types of living roof:

EXTENSIVE – a thin layer of soil supporting a mixture of low-growth and drought-tolerant plants.

- Soil depth of up to 60-200mm
- Low maintenance
- Best use = ecological protection layer
- Ideal plant species: succulents, herbs, mosses, grasses

SEMI-INTENSIVE – a deeper layer of soil that allows for a more diverse mixture of greenery.

- Soil depth of around 120-250mm
- Medium maintenance
- Best use = customised living roof
- Ideal plant species: shrubs, herbaceous perennials and grasses.

INTENSIVE – a substantial layer of soil supporting a range of plant species including trees and shrubs for a private garden or outdoor living area.

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- Soil depth usually 150-400mm
- High maintenance
- Best use = park-like garden or outdoor living area
- Ideal plant species: lawns, perennials, bushes and trees.

MODULAR-TRAY LIVING ROOFS

– pre-vegetated trays of plant life that are placed on roofs and clicked together in a grid (cheapest and easiest option to install, maintain and fix water leaks).

- Ideal plant species include sedums and native wild flowers.

“Green roofs can protect the waterproof membrane underneath (from UV and wind etcetera),” director of Greenroofs Ltd, Will Thorne, says.

“Overseas, many waterproof membrane companies will extend the warranty period from 20 to 40 years if they are having a green roof.”

Taking into account Canterbury’s geographical positioning, we’ve tallied up the pros and cons of adding a living roof to your next build or renovation:

PROS

- Mitigate the effects of climate change
- Produce better air quality through low-carbon cities
- Create mini eco-systems that grow bird and plant life
- Excellent waterproofing and water retention solutions
- Natural thermal insulation = lower electricity bills
- Little maintenance (some plant species look after themselves)
- Completely unique and customised layout
- Softens the aesthetics of concreted urban landscapes by adding colour and texture to roofs
- Increases the lifespan of a dwelling.

CONS

- Hard to retrofit (best suited to a new build)
- Can be more expensive to install and maintain than a typical roof
- Choice of plant species is subject to practicality and suitability
- If a leak occurs, it can be difficult to find (unless using modular trays)
- It can also be difficult to maintain if not choosing self-servicing plants
- Its full aesthetic appeal can’t be appreciated as much from ground level as from height, like in metropolises with skyscrapers.

Images supplied courtesy of Greenroofs Ltd.

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Passive persuasion

The passive house concept has been igniting a flame in New Zealand and all of a sudden the fire is beginning to spread.

Pro Clima NZ Ltd's national sales manager, Simon Gibbon, is an avid supporter of the passive house building standard and says our attitudes are definitely changing in regards to house performance.

"It took five years of persistence to break through a wall of misunderstandings about airtightness, ignorance to the application of basic physics to buildings, and attitudes of the industry against anything beyond building code minimums," he explains.



A kitchen in a certified passive house on the Kapiti Coast.
Photo: eHaus



“It’s a good feeling to be at the cutting edge of creating healthy buildings for New Zealanders.”

“The building code requirements for performance are not a target. They are the lowest legal minimums. If your aim is at the minimum, what happens if you miss?”

Missing is not an option when building a certified passive house. These buildings are not light years away from building code standards, but are the pinnacle of house performance and energy efficiency.

They do this by minimising heat loss and optimising passive heat gains. This is achieved by using airtight materials together with a ventilation system, or more specifically a heat recovery ventilation system, slightly thicker insulation and high-performance windows.

One benefit of living in a certified passive house is having virtually no heating or cooling bills.

“Each passive house is designed for the specific climate it will sit in,” Simon explains. “This governs the insulation thickness, the window performance and the shading to prevent overheating. All passive houses must prevent air movement through the walls, floor and ceiling.”

And that’s where Pro Clima comes in.

Pro Clima has products to assist in achieving the airtightness requirement whether you are working with structurally insulated panels, cross-laminated timber, masonry, straw-bale, rammed earth or the more traditional timber framed construction.

“Thankfully we now have plenty of designers targeting airtightness – using a wide range of building materials including our smart vapour retarder ‘INTELLO’.

“INTELLO is recognised internationally as a certified passive house component, making it easy to incorporate in any certified passive house project.

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Certified passive house in Wanaka. Photo: Simon Devitt



The Passive House Institute of New Zealand

The passive house institute is an incorporated charitable trust that, using extensive research, is ultimately educating New Zealanders about improved health and energy efficiency within our buildings, as well as promoting the passive house standard. Their website boasts a list of passive house professionals, resources and all the latest news and information surrounding this concept.

For more information go to:
www.phinz.org.nz

Pro Clima is also the distributor of the Minneapolis Blower Doors – “this is the tool to measure how airtight the building is.” Simon clarifies, “it’s the only on-site verification and the builder’s way to check if they have met the requirement for passive house certification.

“It’s a good feeling to be at the cutting edge of creating healthy buildings for New Zealanders.”

With the constant stream of information from PHINZ coupled with the overwhelming evidence supporting certified passive houses in New Zealand, Simon believes it is just a matter of time before the New Zealand Building Code steps up to the plate.

“Australia is taking the first step in Australasia with the introduction of a measured airtightness standard coming in as part of their building code in 2019. We would hope NZ won’t be too far behind, but we don’t need to wait for legislation to start improving buildings right now.”

Simon, for one, is putting his money where his mouth is and is very much looking forward to the upcoming, colder months.

“I have just built my own passive house here in Christchurch which is soon to be certified. For the first time in my life I’m looking forward to a winter, and I expect to get through it with healthy kids. Strange feeling!”

Images supplied courtesy of the Passive House Institute of New Zealand.




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What does it take to build a home that performs at its best? A sustainable, energy efficient, healthy and practical home. A home that you are going to love and it will love you back.

Harakeke Consultants director Claudia Kaltenstadler says it's really quite simple – find a good architect.

If this is the sort of home you are after, an architect is going to be your most valuable tool.

"We need to work together with architects more than ever, especially if you want sustainability and energy efficiency," Claudia says.

There are a lot of new products on the market that are essential to sustainability and energy efficiency, and their performance is often underestimated.

"It's the other extreme to what we are used to, we are now overheating our homes," says Claudia.

Utilising the sun (especially the orientation of the sun or positioning) is essential, but our homes need to have adequate shading, by way of eaves or other alternative solutions, to keep them comfortable the whole year round.

A lot of architects have access to specific software to read the sun's projection throughout the different seasons and during the course of the day. With this knowledge they can design your home to make the most of this free resource.



On top of designing a home to perform at its best, architects can specify every product used, guaranteeing sustainable and non-toxic materials. They can even specify the weather tightness and air tightness of every home, to reduce the air changes per hour, which is beneficial to the client to save energy costs.

Sound expensive? It doesn't have to be.

Claudia and her team at Harakeke Consultants have extensive knowledge on good design practice and the best products for the job. They offer a free step by step service and put you in contact with the right architects and builders specifically suited to your build. Ultimately weeding through all the nonsense so you don't have to.

“

We need to work together with architects more than ever, especially if you want sustainability and energy efficiency.

”

Before you have even decided on a section, her team can take you through the entire process, all you need is a budget, which they will help you stick to.

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The sustainable home checklist

By Lydia Truesdale



Photo courtesy of The SUPERHOME movement which promotes the building of houses that exceed the Building Code and offer more energy efficient living. www.superhome.co.nz

Being sustainable doesn't cost the earth; literally, figuratively or in any other sense.

Begin with the basics

There are the now-obvious things we can do to live a more sustainable lifestyle:

- Ride-sharing
- Insulating our homes
- Recycling and composting
- Choosing eco-friendly alternatives (electronics over paper over plastic)
- Switching off appliances when not using them
- Shopping local and organic, growing your own and limiting meat intake.

But what clever, often overlooked, environmentally-friendly habits can we make at a lesser level that still have impact?

There are so many sustainable substitutes for their plastic or less-ecofriendly counterparts that won't break the bank to adopt.

How sustainable is your home? See for yourself.

Kitchen

- Do you use cardboard food and storage containers?
- Do you use eco-friendly, reusable shopping bags?
- Do you use BPA-free drink bottles?
- Do you air dry dishes during warmer weather and only wash full dish loads?
- Do you use pot lids when cooking?
- Do you minimise opening your refrigerator/freezer doors as much as possible?
- Do you buy in bulk to a) save on cost and b) reduce packaging waste?

Bathroom

- Have you installed a water-saving shower head?
- Have you lowered your water heater tank temperature to 120 degrees?
- Do you use low-flow faucets?
- Do you have any leaky taps?
- Do you choose appliances with better water and energy efficient ratings?
- Do you steam your clothes while having a shower instead of ironing them?
- Do you open the window instead of using the extractor fan?

Lounge and general household

- Do you air dry clothes during warmer weather?
- Do you make your own cleaning products using lemon juice, vinegar and sodium bicarbonate?
- Do you buy compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or LED light bulbs?
- Have you installed double pane windows?
- Are your hot water pipes and heater tank insulated?
- Have you switched off any wall sockets that aren't in use?
- Do you use rechargeable batteries?

Outdoors

- Have you installed any solar solutions, for example, roof panels, solar-powered lights or DIY-solar solutions?
- Do you regrow your leftover herbs? *Tip: Snip off the stem ends, pop in a glass of water, wait for the roots to regenerate, and replant.*
- Have you maximised shelter and coverage from natural shading?
- Do you capture and reuse rain water as irrigation?



Gleneagles Terrace, designed by Craig South of Cymon Allfrey Architects.



There's more to cladding than just aesthetics, but often aesthetics is all that is considered.

Admittedly aesthetics play a vital role; after all, the exterior of your home makes a huge statement. But before making any hasty decisions, make sure to assess all your options so you will feel confident with your choice for years to come.

Bricks

Advantages

- Low maintenance
- Doesn't bow or twist
- Resilient to harsh conditions
- Flame resistant; for houses that are built close to boundary lines and require a fire-rated wall, brick is a good option
- Noise barrier for busy neighborhoods.

Disadvantages

- Brick can be a more expensive option due to its low maintenance advantage
- Old bricks can become brittle, becoming more susceptible to damage

- Bricks carry a lot of weight and require a rebate in your foundations to support them
- Some areas don't allow brick cladding due to its weight i.e. TC3 land or hill sites. If you are set on having bricks in these areas, engineering costs can sky-rocket.

Wood

Advantages

- Offers a natural appearance
- Adaptability, easily stained or painted to your liking
- Customisable
- For DIYers, wooden cladding does not always require a professional to replace
- Replacements can be made from similar materials if the exact product is not available.

Disadvantages

- High maintenance
- Can be susceptible to termites such as bora
- Installers need to allow for warping, shrinkage and expansion
- Will fade over time and not necessarily evenly

- If not treated correctly, wooden cladding is susceptible to rot and mold.

Stucco

Advantages

- Stucco basically forms a concrete shell around your home which means you will require less energy to cool your home in the summer and warm it up in the winter
- A great sound barrier for busier neighborhoods
- Resists rot, mildew and mold
- Fire retardant.

Disadvantages

- Can crack easily in an earthquake as it is not designed to flex as well as other products
- Labour costs to apply can stack up, making it a more expensive option
- Not suitable for really wet climates
- Can be subject to expanding and shrinking in warm and cold weather, especially if excess moisture is allowed to build up
- Choose your colours wisely, though you can paint stucco easily, when it comes time

to refinish it, you will have to sandblast any paint off to allow the new layer to bond.

Fibre cement products

Advantages

- Low maintenance
- Can be made to replicate other materials such as wood, brick and stone
- Hard wearing to all elements
- Easily customised to your liking
- Fireproof
- Won't rot

Disadvantages

- Requires specialist installation
- Can be more expensive upfront, especially for pre-primed and pre-painted options.

Conclusion

There is a vast array of options under each banner, no two are the same and each will have their own advantages and disadvantages.

This content is a broad overview, whatever cladding you choose, be sure to do your research. Always refer to the manufacturer's specifications and technical manual to get the best out of your chosen product.



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Where to find landscaping professionals

Registered Master Landscapers (RML), previously known as the Landscaping Industry Association of New Zealand (LIANZ), has been officially representing the landscaping industry since 1985 with a mission to promote professionalism and quality trade practice.

"It is perceived that any builder can take on hard landscaping; some can and do it well," says director of Humphreys Landscaping Ltd and RML board member, Scott Humphreys.

"The important thing to consider though is that most hard landscaping is designed and built to contain plants or lawns, and requires the knowledge of skilled landscapers to plan for this and allow for irrigation and drainage to ensure that it functions properly."

Landowners can access a local landscaping professional by accessing the RML website. All accredited members of Registered Master Landscapers are able to provide professional advice and relevant services.

The recent change of name reflects the interest of late in the organisation's membership and awards, and the consequent, noticeable, industry-wide improvement of standards in relation to construction methods and associated regulation, the quality of available materials, and health and safety practices.

RML has branches across New Zealand and actively recruits members based on an assessment of their standard of work.

Members are bound by RML's Constitution, Code of Conduct, Environmental Policy and Complaints Procedure, ensuring professional business practices are carried out with integrity at all times.

“

The important thing to consider is that most hard landscaping is designed and built to contain plants or lawns, and requires the knowledge of skilled landscapers to plan for this and allow for irrigation and drainage to ensure that it functions properly.

- Scott Humphreys

”



Membership

The various membership options offered by Registered Master Landscapers provide benefits, information and support tailored to the needs of different professionals within the industry:

- Student/apprenticeship membership
- Accredited membership
- General membership
- Allied membership
- Affiliate membership.

Accreditation

Members are accredited by assessment of their work and documentation can be endorsed in any combination of landscape design, landscape construction, landscape horticulture, landscape maintenance, and landscape contract management.

They are required to submit a number of projects indicative of the services they perform in their business. Independent professionals who are qualified in the specific field(s) are employed by RML to then assess these projects before additional checks and a decision can be made.

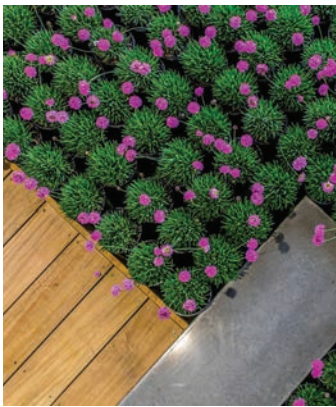


Image courtesy of Goom Landscapes www.goomlandscapes.co.nz.

Awards

Registered Master Landscapers celebrates and awards excellence in the landscaping industry through its biennial awards programme. The event highlights projects that members have been involved in where the quality of work has been outstanding.

Scott says this year they have had a large increase in the number of entries and the quality of work is "outstanding". The results of 2018's awards will be known in early July.

Registered Master Landscapers also encourages the next generation of landscaping professionals through its annual Young Landscaper of the Year competition.



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Gardening for the mind, body and soul

By Katie Costain and Ben Freeman

Relaxation, fitness, family fun and delicious food; sound like a dream vacation? It can also all be found in a simple backyard garden.

Gardening provides a total-body workout, allows us to literally reap what we've sowed, and provides us with an opportunity to reconnect with nature and our loved ones. The best part is you can eat the fruits of your labour.

Digging in the dirt benefits your mind, body, and soul—not just your soil. There are multiple benefits you can expect to reap by getting out in your garden.

Get physical

We all know how important it is to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day.

No matter your age or lifestyle, gardening is an excellent way to boost physical activity – think of it as an outdoor gym workout. Getting out in the garden can help strengthen bones, muscles, and joints, decrease the likelihood of diseases including obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes,

Tips on working out while gardening:

- Do a full range of activities; incorporating endurance, flexibility, dexterity and strength
- Alternate between light and heavy activities such as digging, pruning, planting and watering
- Switch hands and change stance to use muscles on both sides of the body
- Use manual rather than electric tools if possible.

Research from all corners of the globe has found that gardeners have better sleep patterns, well-being and functioning, greater life satisfaction, enhanced self-esteem, and fewer feelings of depression and fatigue than non-gardeners.

While gardening requires working with our hands, it also gives our brains a workout, provides an outlet for creativity, and nurtures a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Planning and designing the layout of the garden, researching appropriate plants that thrive in our climate, and learning gardening techniques encourage us to problem solve and be creative.

heart disease and stroke and promote longer, healthier lives.

Get nutritious

If we are what we eat, growing our own food can make us healthier. Growing our own fresh produce gives us the opportunity to harvest foods when they are at their best, which allows them to accumulate as many nutrients as possible.

Numerous studies have also shown that children who actively participate in gardening and learn to grow their own food have a greater preference for, and increased consumption of, fruit and vegetables.

Likewise for adults, when we put the effort into choosing, growing and harvesting our own fruits and vegetables, we're also far more likely to eat them.

Improve mental health

Not only is getting out in your garden good for your physical health, it also has a positive impact on your mental health too.

Protect yourself when you're gardening

- Wear sunscreen and protective clothing including a hat, correct footwear and gloves
- Take regular breaks, stretch and change position often
- Bend at the knees and don't strain when lifting heavy objects
- Drink plenty of water especially in warm weather
- Store garden tools and equipment safely
- Observe safety instructions when using potting mix, any sprays or fertilizers.

Katie Costain and Ben Freeman are the directors of Billygoat Landscape Architecture (BGLA), based in Canterbury and Wellington. For more information, visit www.bgla.co.nz



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The right fit for the job

It's in our Kiwi DNA to want the ultimate backyard; we are entertainers, we love a BBQ on a warm summer's evening and there's nothing more rewarding than being able to sit outside and relax after a hard day in the office, but how do you get the ultimate backyard?

We are frequently overwhelmed with stories of dodgy tradesmen; it can be an understandably daunting task sifting through the astronomical number of 'tradies' to find someone reliable and trustworthy.

But Trademark Paving Ltd quantity surveyor Andy McLeod manages to make it all sound rather simple, you just have to look for experience and reputation.

"Tradies and installers live and die by their reputation," he says.

Finding the right people for the job and keeping costs down go hand in hand so it is important to get it right. It's not hard to find someone with a good reputation; as they say, the proof is in the pudding.

"Always ask around friends and relatives who have had work done or ask if they've [the landscaper] done work in the local area that you can have a look at. Most should be able to tell you about, or show you photos of a job they're proud of," Andy says.

"We will always try and show off our paving and concrete work. This builds trust and reassures customers of our skill."

“

Always ask around friends and relatives who have had work done or ask if they've [the landscaper] done work in the local area that you can have a look at. Most should be able to tell you about, or show you photos of a job they're proud of.

”

Social media has become a great means for people to ask around and get advice on work they want to get done and who to call. This is a helpful way to find companies in your area, however, it is important to remain vigilant in this process and be asking the right questions.

Andy warns this can sometimes leave you with more questions than answers and you may receive a lot of mixed messages. It is always safer to judge from their experience or the advice from those you know and trust.

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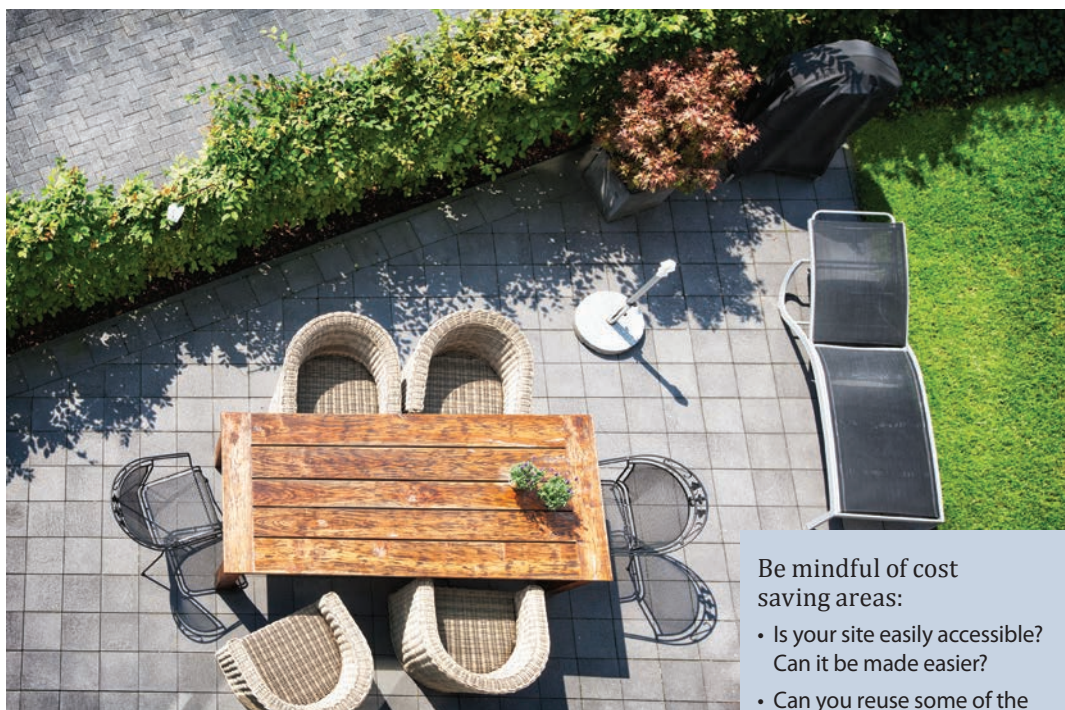
From the very first meeting you have with your landscaper, be upfront with your plans and let them know exactly how much you are willing to spend.

"We all have grand plans in our head and that's important as imagination will always be key to driving a great project, big and small.

"But reality bites hard. Be upfront with what you've got so that you can be directed in the best ways to spend the money before it blows out. That being said, don't be scared to push for what you want," Andy says.

There may be elements of the project that you can take on yourself to help keep the costs down but be mindful not to make the situation more complicated.

"It may be something simple," Andy explains, "always consider the cost of dumping materials and waste. Can something be saved and used elsewhere



before its carted and dumped for a cost?"

He also suggests you consider the accessway to your site, "Is it restrictive and how can this be

negated?" By working through these issues you can save the tradesmen time and ultimately money, a result we are all willing to strive for.

Be mindful of cost saving areas:

- Is your site easily accessible? Can it be made easier?
- Can you reuse some of the waste material elsewhere?
- How good are your DIY skills? Know your limits
- Are you able to plant your own foliage?



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There are always ways to save time and as such labour costs on site. "Be mindful of your own skill level though. Many Kiwis are great at DIY so talk it through with the project manager and agree who's doing what."

Once your garden is mapped out and you know the general design plan you can take matters such as planting into your own hands. Again this can be a huge cost saver, and getting out in the garden can also be quite therapeutic; it's a win/win.

Getting the right advice on what to plant where will ensure you're happy with your garden, not only as soon as you plant it, but as it grows and matures.

"Trademark has team members with qualifications in horticulture and they are able to direct customers in what should be planted where as well as what soils and other growing aids to use."

There is a reason we go to the experts and there are plenty out there that you can trust.



Trademark Paving lives by a strict set of values to uphold its reputation:

TRUST

"We understand that every strong working relationship is built on trust. That's why it's at the core of what we do. We communicate openly with clients, give honest assessment and do what we say we will."

SAFETY

"Everyone goes home safe, every day. We are first and foremost a people company. The safetywelfare of our team, and the wider environment in which we work always

comes first. Health and safety is not a theory at Trademark - it's ingrained in our culture."

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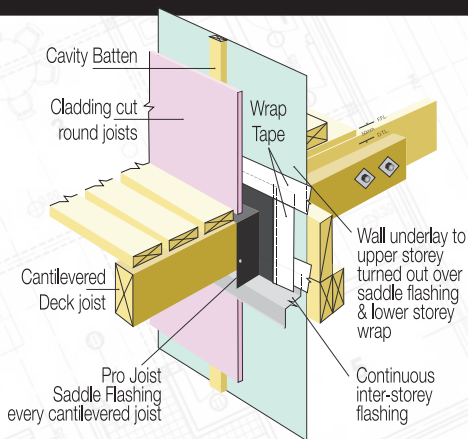
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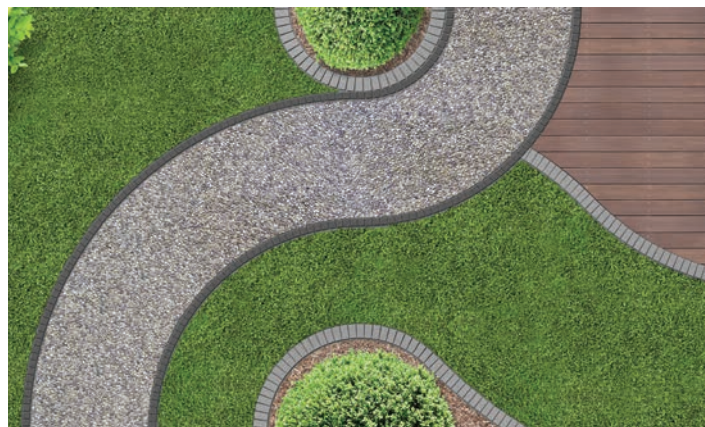
Having a team on board such as Trademark Paving who can work out and talk you through the design process, work out a budget, as well as take care of the project management, means you will know exactly what you're going to get.

Everyone will be on the same page and you are going to be happy with the results, as well as the cost.

"Try and take as much advice from those doing the work as

possible," Andy concludes. Many tradies will offer advice at the time they're pricing a job, so take the time to discuss it with them and be realistic. They'll let you know of potential risks.

"Planting flowers and shrubs is common, but talk it through with experts. This is an investment in your property that can reward you in many ways, not only when selling on, but also when you're enjoying time to yourself, with family or entertaining."





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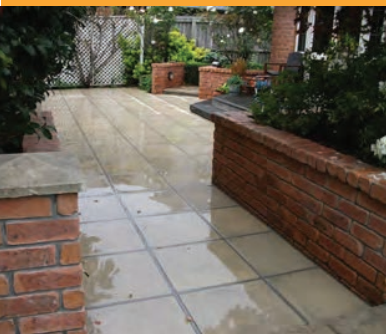


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Autumn Trends 2018

By Ann-Marie Appleton

Here are a few of the many interior design trends coming through this year:

Midnight blue, navy blue, indigo blue

are very versatile colours and crowd favourites. The perfect replacement for black. They can be used as a neutral or as an accent colour and work in almost every style of décor.

Start small if you are unsure how to incorporate them into your design project, such as cushions, pillows, velvet headboard and pair with a crisp white for a classic effect.

Burnt orange, copper and maple accents

will radiate warmth and energy and are quite stimulating for any interior space, especially in more formal areas, and look great with dark blue too.

Fifty shades of neutral grey.

Grey used on its own, as a base colour or an accent colour, will pull the bolder colours together. A favourite for all those who love the neutrals and for those that want to tone down any bolder colours. Look for a grey that's not too warm or cool. If you get this wrong, then a room can look dull and cold.

Patterned and geometric tiles

are well and truly on trend and pushing out white and beige tiles. Bold patterns, Moroccan inspired and geometric tiles are very popular and can create stunning interiors.

For a classic look, pair black and white patterned tiles with a natural element like wood or even concrete. Use a larger scale pattern tile on the floor – this will make the space look larger, as fewer tiles and less grout will prevent the floor from being 'chopped up'.

Japandi

A rising design trend, the word is a fusion between Japanese and Scandinavian, which is clean and minimalist, yet warm and cosy. Detailed in craftsmanship and featuring, raw materials and simple and natural elements, this style delivers a calm, serene look. However, if you love colour and decorated spaces, this isn't for you.

Embellishments

Fringes, tassels, ruching, cords, pompoms, beads, crystals, stones, suede and feathers are all back in vogue, and the major fabric houses sell metres and metres of Passementerie (which comes from the French for a maker of ornate work, and designers use it on lamp shades, upholstery, cushions and curtains. It can also make a plain fabric look fabulous too.

Ann-Marie Appleton is the director of interior design company Frobisher Interiors. She holds a diploma in interior design and is a member of DINZ. Visit www.frobisher.co.nz.



The benefit of a fresh set of eyes

Interiors expert Tiffany Anderson has guided many home and business owners through the Christchurch rebuild. She's excited about the shape the city is taking.

A professional set of eyes will ensure maximised use and enjoyment in any setting, Tiffany says.

She points out that when you live in a space, are so close to it and used to it being a certain way, it can be hard to imagine it working in a different arrangement, but a professional can help you see through a fresh pair of eyes.

"Clients might spend ages looking at things but are too involved to see the big picture. A designer should be there to simplify the process, to present ideas and help tie it all together," Tiffany says.

That, and providing access to an exclusive network of resources and professionals that clients wouldn't otherwise have access to, she says.

Canterbury is experiencing an exciting aesthetic coming-of-age of sorts, spurred by and in keeping with the region-wide rebuild.

While previously there hasn't been the shared reasoning for being so boldly modern in a typically heritage building landscape, we are stepping away from that psyche.

"Canterbury has traditionally been a little more conservative, slightly English in style, especially when it comes to old and country homesteads.

"But we are getting more fashion-forward as far as interiors go and people are open to so many more ideas now and, with the surge of interior magazines and their digital counterparts Instagram and Pinterest, people are more willing to step outside their comfort zones."

Through her company, Tiffany Anderson Design, Tiffany typically

covers residential new builds and renovations throughout Canterbury, however a penchant for unique aesthetic ventures means the odd commercial job finds its way into the books.

“Clients might spend ages looking at things but are too involved to see the big picture. A designer should be there to simplify the process, to present ideas and help tie it all together.”

- Tiffany Anderson

One such job was the restoration of the Harquin Public House restaurant and bar, which Tiffany felt "pretty special" to have been involved in.

The project required working closely with the client over six months, "bringing out the best of that building and being sympathetic to the design. We sourced gorgeous wall papers and tiles to reflect the character of the building, but also give it that modern twist".

Another popular service for Tiffany is preparing homes for market, where a common request is a new colour scheme to freshen a space, tone it down or neutralise it as a blank canvas.

It was more than 20 years ago that Tiffany's foray into interior design began. Landing an exciting role creating paint colours for boutique paint company Aalto Colour



was, in hindsight, the perfect preparation for her solo creative venture into interior design.

With a multifaceted background in interiors and an enviable network of resources and contacts, Tiffany Anderson has her stake firmly in the ground as one of Canterbury's foremost interior designers.

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Seeing no evil

Would you consider getting a house inspector in before undertaking any renovations?

No? Well you're not alone. But it could in fact save you a lot of money, because unless you have been keeping on top of house maintenance you could uncover some rather unpleasant surprises.

Considering the large investment involved in owning a home, we, as New Zealanders, are terrible at maintaining them – and that's putting it nicely.

According to the BRANZ 2010 House Survey, there was a large disparity between the occupiers' view on the condition of their home compared to the actual condition of the home.

It said, "The householder perceived the condition of the property to be significantly better than the BRANZ assessors".

For owner-occupiers; more than 70 percent believed their homes to be in good condition when in fact BRANZ assessors only put 42 percent in that category. For renters; approximately 80 percent of participants believed their homes were in good condition and BRANZ found only 22 percent were.

Realsure director Sarah Symon cannot stress these facts enough. She is desperate for people to understand the importance of maintaining their homes and to have accredited building surveyors to assess exactly where their home stands.



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6 home renovation steps

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- 1 Book your Realsure HouseProud inspection now and get the facts about where your home is really at and what needs to be done.
- 2 Write up a maintenance plan based on the prioritised work identified in your report.
- 3 Work out what else you want to do and add to your plan as 'improvements'.
- 4 Get quotes/costs for the 'high priority' and 'improvement' work in the plan.
- 5 Set your budget. Allocate to the most urgent work and what is left can go towards the improvements you want to do.
- 6 Set dates for the work, organise necessary help, and away you go.



Preferably, this would have been done prior to purchase, but if you're ever in the position to upgrade your home, it is never too late to assess its state.

Sarah has run multiple speaking seminars on house maintenance and has some perfect examples of good work going to waste.

"It's all well and good to replace that rotten skirting - but why is

it rotten? That's the issue that needs to be fixed."

Accredited building surveyors will alert you to the problem saving you a lot more money in the long run. "It is the most cost-effective first step before you undertake any renovation."

Sarah says this not only from a business point of view but from a personal point of view as well.

"I've built several homes and renovated numerous homes, we use it [inspections] for reviewing investment properties and to assist with costing budgets. Without it you could absolutely blow your budget. But we see all the time why it should have been done before people do a renovation or an extension."

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It's all well and good to replace that rotten skirting - but why is it rotten? That's the issue that needs to be fixed.

”

A builder is not a building surveyor, "it's a completely different profession," Sarah confirms.

Assessing the state of a building is not necessarily their job. Often, Sarah says, the team at Realsure will get called in by architects or builders who are about to do a renovation and notice it's going to cause them problems because of the condition of the existing home.



But this may not get picked up by all.

Realsure owner Bruce Symon has seen so many people beautifying their interiors without paying any

attention to the exterior work. "They are not doing the work that keeps the weather out," he says.

Realsure see rot damage around joinery and gaps between the joins, rotting piles, old roofs that need replacing and because people are not aware of these things, they are spending money on the wrong areas.

"People will have these beautiful kitchens only to see the rain come through a couple of months later. They didn't understand the condition of their home before they allocated a budget and began renovations," Sarah explains.

And it is more common than you think.

What Realsure will often see is, when doing an extension, the

house actually needs new piles, or people will renovate straight over old damage without fixing the problem; especially in kitchens and bathrooms.

Accredited building surveyors, accredited being the operative word, give you a risk summary outlining the sense of urgency for the maintenance factor surrounding your home.

Any significant defects they find that you need to be aware of will be brought to light, increasing the odds your renovation plans will go ahead without a hitch, but more importantly, you will understand how safe your home really is.

Thinking of renovating? If you hadn't already booked in a house inspection, now would be the time.



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What you need to know about “as is where is”

When looking to progress your insurance claim, make sure that your insurer provides you with all the options.

This may include repairing or rebuilding your home; building a new home on another section; you buying an existing home elsewhere; or cash-settling your claim while you retain your damaged property.

Some insurance companies require your home to meet a certain standard if you wish to occupy or on-sell.

So what exactly is selling ‘as is, where is’?

Essentially selling as is where is equates to cash settling both your EQC and insurance claims, retaining these funds and then selling your home on the open market without carrying out any

significant repairs. Other property may also be sold ‘as is’ where the property was uninsured at the time of the earthquakes.

Written confirmation of insurance offer

Whatever option you choose, make sure that you receive the offer in writing from your insurer. This is important for your records and proof of your settlement (excluding settlement figures) may be needed when selling.

Take legal advice

Before signing anything be sure to have your solicitor approve it prior to proceeding. A couple of words incorrect can have dire consequences and significantly jeopardize your future plans if left unchecked. Choose a solicitor who has become very well-versed with insurance settlements as their knowledge and experience is often invaluable.

Why the demand?

Due to retaining both EQC and insurance settlements you offer the home to the open market at an attractive price due to the property being uninsured. This is normally well below current market value for an equivalent undamaged and fully insured home. The buying public generally perceive this to be an excellent opportunity to secure an affordable property.

Is an engineer’s report important?

Yes - it’s essential, as it does two things – it addresses the question in the back of a buyer’s mind of “is this house safe?” and secondly it forms the absolute baseline of representation.

Will anything come back to bite me?

Peter Griffioen from Harcourts Gold stated that you need to use a real estate company like his that knows all the appropriate clauses

to enter into the sale and purchase agreement. Get a solicitor that specialises in the area such as Sarah Fitzgerald of Mortlock McCormack Law to advise you prior to proceeding with the sale or purchase of your “as is where is” property. Sarah has experience in assisting clients with all “as is where is” properties and insurance settlements.

Should I make improvements?

It is important that your home is represented with transparency to the open market with an engineer’s report that was completed prior to any improvements. We have found however, that the buying public generally respond more favourably to a home following cosmetic repairs due to the aesthetic appeal. Reminder to photo all the improvements and best to get a PC4 from an engineer so you have a better chance of the purchaser getting the house insured.




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Talk to us about your EQC issues, insurance settlements and/or any “As Is Where Is” property queries.

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What to consider when downsizing

Is downsizing the family home on your mind?

When the kids have flown the coop you may no longer require the extra bedrooms, find the house is becoming too difficult to maintain and may need to live more centralised to have easy access to necessary amenities with greater dependency on the cars.

So here is a useful list of advantages and disadvantages to be considered before making any hasty, life-changing decisions.

Advantages of downsizing

- You could perhaps capitalise on a healthy real estate market
- You can release capital by selling a large family home and buying smaller and cheaper (perhaps subdividing is an option here)
- Mortgage repayments could be a thing of the past
- It's an opportunity to de-clutter
- It gives you the chance to update your décor
- Less space to maintain, freeing up your spare time
- Smaller homes often lead to smaller annual household bills
- You have the opportunity to move closer to family and friends
- You can situate yourself closer to necessary amenities required for greater dependency.

Disadvantages of downsizing

- There is no guarantee your house will sell for the price you want it to
- Moving closer to the city isn't necessarily going to be cheaper buying
- You may find yourself battling with more complicated ownership structures i.e. cross lease titles and unit titles
- Having to part with years of belongings can be an emotional task
- You may have to sell old furniture and purchase new furniture to fit your new space
- You will have to adapt to new services in your area and new neighbours
- If you decide to rent there will always be uncertainty of price increases and changes in ownership



“Thankfully there are many professionals adept in this area who can lend timely advice to find which option is best for you.”

- Adapting to a smaller space can take some getting used to.

buying an apartment or unit, or selling up and renting.

There are a range of options available to choose from if downsizing is playing on your mind, for example: moving into a smaller home in a subdivision, moving into a retirement village,

There are advantages and disadvantages for each; the key is to do your research.

Thankfully there are many professionals adept in this area who can lend timely advice to find which option is best for you.



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Subdividing can be a very effective means of maximising the value of a property.

The team at Survus Consultants are surveyors, planners and engineers with all the necessary expertise to advise on the specialist issue of subdivisions.

What exactly is a subdivision? "It's the term for splitting a piece of land into individual lots," says Craig Hurford, survey manager at Survus Consultants.

"Subdivisions can be as basic as a residential two lot in-fill development where homeowners chop off part of their backyard to downsize their property.

"Or it can be as complex as a totally new multi-lot development and we have seen quite a number of these in Christchurch since the earthquakes," he says.

There can also be rural lifestyle developments and high country subdivisions, so the range is very diverse.

"Big developments require new roads and services like sewers, storm water, power and telecommunications. A very basic subdivision, on the other hand, may have only minor servicing requirements."

No matter the size of the subdivision or its location - in the city or in the country - Survus Consultants have a clear message.

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“We can present all the options for a particular piece of land and help clients optimise their property, while keeping in mind the importance of good sustainable development.”

- Craig Hurford

”

“Come and see us early in the piece when you are thinking about a subdivision project. We’ve been involved with subdivisions since 1957, so I think we can say we are pretty knowledgeable about what’s required and what the potential pitfalls and issues may be.

“We can present all the options for a particular piece of land and help clients optimise their property, while keeping in mind the importance of good sustainable development.”

Every subdivision is unique. No one size process fits all, often because of the criteria specified in the relevant local authority’s district plan.

“Under the Resource Management Act each authority developed its own plan with different subdivision rules. We have the expertise to translate these criteria on a case by case basis.

“A layperson can’t be expected to know these tricks of the trade and it’s easy to make costly mistakes. There might be other requirements as well – a HAIL (Hazardous Activities and Industries List) Report for instance, or geo-technical and engineering reports.

“All of these can affect the cost of the proposed subdivision or the length of time it will take to complete.”

Survus offer a free onsite consultation and fee proposal for subdivisions anywhere in Canterbury.

They can work through the project from beginning to end starting with the block of land, applying for all the necessary

consents, handling the land transfer processes and project managing the development until the subdivision is complete.

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New Zealand is renowned for being clean and green and a global bigwig in dairy exports, but there's plenty of room for improvement when it comes to our legislative soil management.

"NZ is very behind the eight ball on this," says managing director of nationwide consultancy Soil Matters, and head soil consultant for the Canterbury area, Rob Flynn.

"Europe and Australia have better protection of soils through legislating what farmers are allowed to put into it, but we've come a long way in the last 10 years."

Rob works with local farmers and landowners to customise a specific formulae that balances

nutrient percentages for optimum soil condition and fertility.

The main issues affecting Canterbury are water quality and overuse of synthetic, namely acidic fertilisers, which is having more of an effect on the biology (bacteria and fungi) of our soil and its composition, resulting in increased soil run off and a lack of rainfall protection.

The removal of shelterbelts and the degradation of soil structure adds to the pollution, leeching and loss of nutrients.



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"Most people think that because they're not an organic farm they don't need organic solutions, but it's about being aware of how important their soil is," Rob says.

On top of that, good advice will save you money, through increased nutritional value of crops and pastures, a decline in weed and pest pressures, and better animal health.

Soil Matters provides comprehensive consultancy relating to all soil matters encompassing pastoral, cropping and viticulture, including:

- Soil testing and reporting
- Individual soil and fertiliser recommendations and management plans
- Nutrient management and farm environment planning
- Customised eco-friendly sustainable fertiliser blends
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Farms of 5ha+ in size must now have an EMP, which requires an overseer base line and includes restrictions on land use, nitrogen and phosphorus levels, and exceeding or not working within these limits results in a fine.

Rob emphasises that good farming involves good record keeping. The average frequency of testing is three to five years following the initial baseline test.

Technology has aided the management process with apps like AgriMap, through which farmers are able to record and easily access information and analysis of their farm. Rob hopes this encourages increased understanding around soil management.

"The more we can save our topsoil, the more we can produce without getting into hydroponics and intensive, synthetic fertilisers.

"If you have healthy soil, you have healthy plant and animal life."



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Lifestyle block owners keen to protect environment

Swannanoa couple Daniel and Michelle Power have gained a fresh insight into best management practices for their lifestyle block during a recent lifestyle block environment project run by the Waimakariri Zone Committee.

There are over 4,500 lifestyle blocks in the Waimakariri, and while they are not significant contributors to water quality issues in the area, collectively they do have an impact on the environment.

Daniel says they were pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the pilot project and would encourage other lifestyle block owners to join workshops planned for March/April 2018.



Michelle and Daniel Power enjoy a tranquil rural life on their Swannanoa lifestyle block with daughters Jess and Ashlee

"It's great to take the time to really look at what you're doing and to have the opportunity to meet regularly with other lifestyle block owners. Even though we're a small drop in the bucket, everything counts when it comes to the environment."

Daniel and Michelle were reassured to discover that their regular soil testing programme is helping them to get the best use of their 20-acre block.

"Knowing that we're on the right track is really helpful. It was also

interesting to learn more about N-loss and irrigation.

"We were both surprised at how much we got out of it and we could easily keep going every week. Sharing knowledge is really the key to growing and developing new skills."



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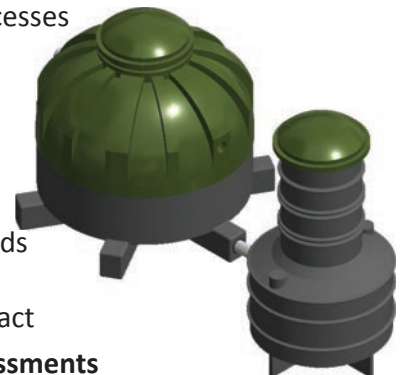
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4 2 2 2

Sold \$409,000

The prognosis for this earthquake-damaged property wasn't terribly flash, and some seven years following the earthquakes, our owners were simply ready to let it go. Thirty-six groups inspected over a 23-day campaign, while six bidders put their hands up on auction day. Although feedback was modest, competitive bidding drove the price to a level comfortable beyond our sellers' expectations.