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*envy*  
Creating  
creative spaces

**Micro-homes**  
Small spaces that are big savers

**Kitchen design**  
*trends*

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ISSUE ELEVEN 2015

17,543

ABC circulation as at 30/06/14



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# New Zealand's Garage Door Experts



The garage door plays an important part in making your home look its best while still feeling safe and secure

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Every home is different and every garage is used differently, so consider an insulated garage door if you think you may have additional uses for the garage space. Insulated garage doors will help regulate temperature and noise in your garage so you can use the extra space the way you want to.

Security of your home, family and possessions is achieved not only by the strength of your garage door but also by the encryption used by your door opener remotes. The latest garage door opener technology uses the same 128-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) security as relied upon by banks, (there's 309 trillion trillion code possibilities) and also transmits across three frequencies to overcome wireless interference issues.

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# The sustainability principle

By Cymon Allfrey

There are many definitions of sustainability, but architecturally it is about minimising the negative environmental impact of buildings - a concept that is achieved through a conscious approach to energy, efficiency and ecology.

As a younger version of myself, I wrote a discourse on sustainability for my registration and took a strong position that it was the only way to construct; that you couldn't design a building without considering it.

It's a position I still firmly believe in however, my view now is more about sustainability by stealth and as a result, it has become a value set and standard practise for every project and client who walks through our door - all projects should benefit.

There is however a difference between being 'environmentally sensible' and being 'green'. My approach to sustainable design is about making good decisions for the right purpose, not just about straw bales, recycled materials and hemp.

Decisions around sustainability in the home need to be made in a socially responsible manner to ensure we are managing the way we use and impact the environment. Buildings that don't consider the environment are fundamentally flawed and we are now more likely to measure the success of a building around the impact that it has on the environment than its consumeristic features.

When discussing new buildings there is no escaping the questions around how sustainability has been incorporated. There is now more awareness around the impact of negative environmental or sustainable decisions, and more

education and focus on the lifecycle, savings and benefits of these decisions when it comes to our buildings.

While there are basics such as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, the translation of this into a tangible reality which also meets the needs of the homeowner, and the unique properties of the site, in a sustainable design solution sees the value of the architect as immeasurable.

Designers are able to unbundle the way in which people live. Ensuring energy and sunlight are going to places where they will be, creating sunny living areas, cooler and more comfortable bedrooms and assisting with the orientation of the home to capture the best of the site, and combat the worst. They understand the questions to ask and the considerations that need to be made to ensure your home adherently performs better.

While many clients now understand the cost savings that can be achieved through sustainable design, it is the role of the architect that ensures these savings are a reality and not simply a pie in the sky promise. We want more from our buildings and the systems and technologies to achieve this are becoming more and more within reach as the barriers around the affordability of sustainability are broken down.

Sustainability in our design practice is part of the service. It is a baseline. Now the challenge is about educating homeowners around better decisions when it comes to material choice and so forth. It is about aiding homebuilders to invest in performance and longevity; not a short term solution.

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# Compact *living*

By Davina Richards

With more people deciding to build their own home and lead a life of simplicity with lower living costs, the tiny home movement is a testament to the benefits of living in a custom-made, compact space with all the amenities of a standard house.

People all around the world are enjoying bespoke and transportable micro-homes and there's one company in Christchurch helping Kiwis make micro-houses their new home.

The Living Box was established in mid-2014 by directors Jonathon Webster and Richard Lorgelly. They specialise in

transportable micro-homes which can be built on a trailer, or bearers and joists. So for anyone who wants to kick back in a 10 sqm home, or needs a bach, sleepout, worker accommodation, hunters' hut, office space, or rental/visitor/tourist accommodation, The Living Box will surely have something to fit the bill, so to speak.

I talk to Jonathon from The Living Box to learn more.

**How did you become interested in micro-homes and why did you decide to set up the business?**

Richard was a builder for many years, but it was while he studied his Bachelor of Architectural Design at CPIT that his interest in micro-architecture began to flourish. The decision to set up the company with me came about

not long after Richard decided he was going to build his first ever tiny home.

**What price range can clients expect?**

Price is very dependent on size and materials, but anywhere between \$15,000 and \$30,000 is possible for a building around 10 sqm. We design to order, so we will quote after a client comes to us and tells us what they need.

**In terms of size, what is the smallest and biggest size you can build?**

There are no real limits to size, although for those clients wanting a building that doesn't need consent, one requirement (there are others) is that the floor area would have to be no bigger than 10 sqm, unless it was on a trailer. The real focus for us is more on

innovative use of space rather than necessarily on tiny buildings.

**How 'green' are the micro-homes?**

A micro home can be built as "green" as a client wants it to be. Heating in particular is often very cheap and easy in a small building for the simple reason that there is less air to be heated. Composting toilets, showers etc can be included, although their inclusion may mean the building would require consent.

You can see The Living Box's first ever build, the Waimo, located in Spark Park on Hereford Street between Oxford Terrace and Colombo Street.

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# Tim Cox's tiny house

By Laura Baker

Christchurch industrial product engineer, Tim Cox, will soon be the proud owner of his first home. And he'll move into the brand new house completely mortgage free.

How can a new home owner be mortgage free you might ask?

It is because Tim's new home is a tiny house. A portable structure with all of the normal home comforts inside, including a lounge, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and laundry facilities. But measuring in at 7.2 metres by 2.5 metres by 4.2 metres, externally it is classed as a light weight trailer.

Tim is part of a growing movement towards tiny house living which has seen a number of small homes on trailers pop up around the country.

His interest in tiny houses was first pricked when a friend of his considered designing one; while the friend pulled out Tim continued to pursue the idea himself. After 11 years of flatting he says the idea solved a lot of his frustrations about the current housing climate.

"I didn't want a mortgage to command the rest of my life and have everything driven around it. I want to have financial freedom and the time to spend with family and friends, rather than being tied down by a mortgage."

Tim began to design and build the trailer and tiny house in October last year. With the trailer complete about three months ago he started constructing his home on it. The structure is now weather tight and ready for the cladding to be attached.

He has built every aspect of his home, personally fitting in the construction around his work and personal life commitments. "I'll move in, in a few months once the doors and cladding are on; then it will be another couple of months of just casually chipping away at it.

When the house is complete Tim will rent an empty section on Wilsons Road for \$50 a week; meanwhile saving pretty efficiently to buy a piece of land outright. "I'd choose an amazing piece of land with a good view over a big house any day."

The estimated cost of the house's materials is \$35,000 and while it is small in size, the smart design elements such as the high ceilings and large windows, make it feel surprisingly big.

"I don't want a big home, but I want a home that has been really well thought through so it



can be small in the scheme of homes, but it can function just as well, if not better.

"It will be cosy, warm, extremely well insulated and low cost to run. If I was buying my first home I know I will be paying pretty good money to walk into an old, damp, poorly insulated home that I'd have to throw a lot of money at."

There is nothing inferior about the construction; in fact Tim says it's actually built better than traditional houses. "It has to be built to go through a permanent earthquake in a sense because it'll move around a lot on the road. So it has to be braced a lot better and built a lot stronger with quality materials."

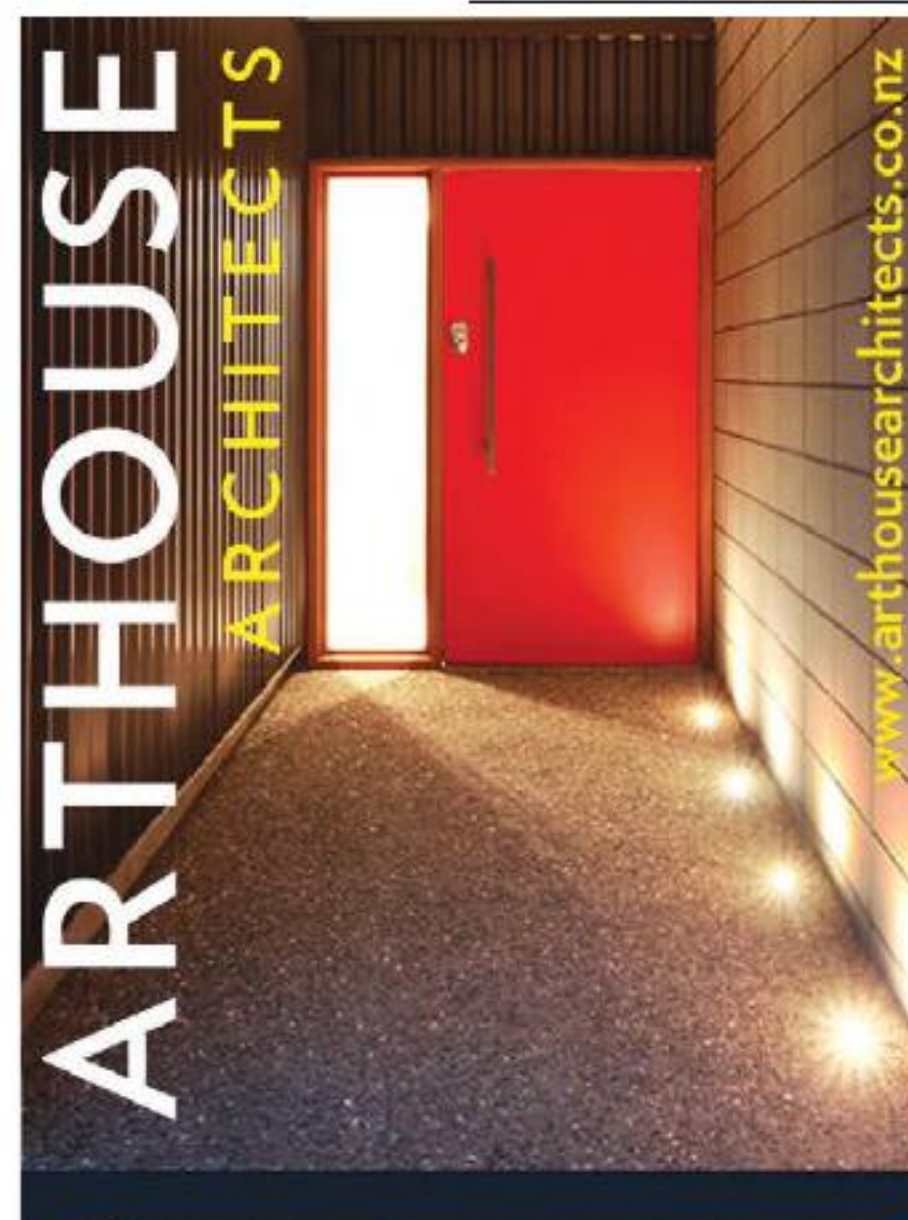
The house is almost completely self sufficient and incredibly cheap to run. It will need an estimated \$30 per month of gas to run the califont, gas water heater, which will provide instant and almost endless hot water.

Power will be supplied via a caravan port which will run the lighting and small appliances, but eventually he hopes to install solar panels.

The property's greywater will run into the sections greywater system while the blackwater waste will pass through a dehydration system which converts the sewage to compost.

The light class trailer it's not a permanent dwelling so it doesn't require any building consents however, there is a weight limit of 3.5 tones.

Now just months away from moving in he says he hasn't regretted it an inch. "It has been such a joy and such a fun process to work through and I'm very excited to move into my own space."



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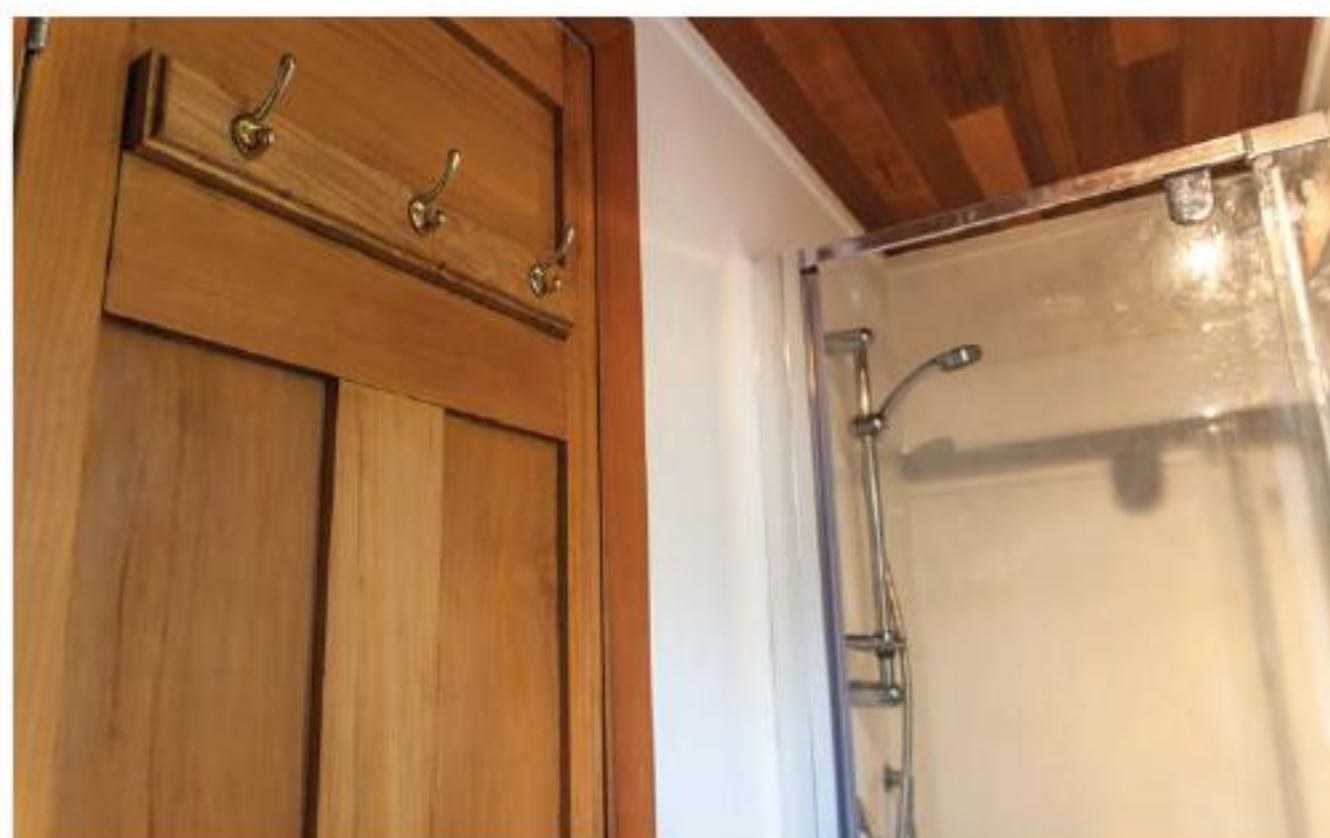


## “Lucy” the tiny house

Tom and Shaye Boddington and their baby girl Hazel have been living in their tiny trailer house since December 2013 in West Auckland. Self described as a ‘DIYer and creative’ combo, it took them four to five months (part time) and cost \$25,000 to build, including furnishings. Together they have evolved the home to suit their small family unit.

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# The energy smart home

## How renovating with solar can save you money

As property prices continue to increase throughout Christchurch, more homeowners are choosing to renovate and experts say if they include solar in their plans, they should be able to save thousands.

With the introduction of solarZero, a first of its kind \$0-down solar plan, the ability to go solar and save money on power is now firmly within reach of all homeowners.

Launched by New Zealand's leading solar power company, solarcity, homebuilders and renovators can now have solar panels installed on their roof without having to pay for the panels or installation.

"SolarZero marks a major step in the drive towards making solar

more affordable for Christchurch residents while delivering a fairer price for power in the long term," says solarcity founder and CEO, Andrew Booth.

"SolarZero sets a price for power generated from your roof at a rate below what is being paid by the power companies; in Christchurch that price is estimated to be up to 30 percent cheaper.

"Our goal is to build a solar power station one roof at a time, giving Cantabrians the option to buy cheaper, cleaner power that won't chop and change as lines maintenance or transporting costs go up," Andrew says.

"SolarZero is fixed for 20 years, giving people who are busy with families and cannot afford the upfront cost of solar panels certainty about a big chunk of their power bill."



For the best results during building/renovations, solarcity recommends involving solar experts. This will help identify how many solar panels are needed to power the house and what direction they should face – a north facing position is best.

Solar panels, mounting hardware, cables and an inverter will then be connected to the roof, which can be completed within a day. Planning an installation as part of

a new build or renovation ensures a clean seamless install without the need for external cables to run down the outside of the house.

"SolarZero ticks a lot of boxes for homebuilders and renovators; you can achieve a higher HomeStar rating, reduce your household spend and contribute to a sustainable future for the next generation."

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Form's framework includes architectural housing, earthquake remediations, extensions and alterations, and they've also touched on the light commercial front.

The proof is in their portfolio, which is complete with design and management. When Matt Stevenson established the Form brand eight years ago, it quickly developed a reputation for high quality craftsmanship in the competitive market. But it was after the earthquakes that Matt, working closely with Graeme of Darby Decorators Ltd, ramped up production to meet the local demand. Form Builders, now with a crew of 12, has defined what it does best - creating dream homes.

A core aspect of Form's success lies within their employee culture.

Matt sets a high standard that each individual employee strives to, to obtain their trademark finish. Matt recognises and appreciates this work ethic of his staff and is proud to be their employer.

It was Form Builders that Maurice Mahoney – co-founder of leading architectural design firm Warren and Mahoney – selected to rebuild his own home, damaged in the earthquakes.

The Form crew believe it is an honour to be a part of this complex build. The company has also built a striking new home on a lifestyle block in Swannanoa, a new home in Strowan, and foundation replacement, house lift and shift on a glass clad house in Opawa.

Form Builders also works with project management company Stream Group, repairing over-cap claims.

Matt says this is fulfilling work that often involves repairing character homes which come out the other end, better than ever. "As the age old saying goes, you are only as good as your last job – I pride Form on this," he says.

"What works for us as a main contractor, is our long standing relationships with

our main subcontractors and suppliers," Matt explains. "It is great to be surrounded by likeminded and focused companies to provide a united service to our clients."

A commitment to create and an ability to produce clients' dreams are key attributes of Form, as well as being recognised as a Registered Master Builder.

Not only do these attributes contribute to their credibility, they also characterise Form Builders' sustainability in this ever-changing industry.



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# Office *envy*

By Davina Richards

Not everyone enjoys working in an office, but you'll certainly love working in your creative space once you join forces with your imagination and run with ideas.

As more people work from home, whether because they run their own business or are freelancing, it is important to have a dedicated area where creativity can thrive, where you can organise and have head space so you can work hard and not be distracted.

The good news is you don't need an entire room; small spaces can seamlessly blend in with your home. Think about spaces near a window, an empty closet, unused space under the stairs or just a spot in your home which looks like it's missing something and all you need to do is re-imagine its space.

Storage is vital and a small office requires clever thinking. How about using a sheet of pegboard; you'll be amazed at how much storage you can get just by using a few hooks!

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# Wood works

Images by Mark Smith

This four bedroom family home, over looking Cox's Bay and the western reaches of the Waitemata Harbour, sits among an eclectic collection of properties on a quiet suburban street.

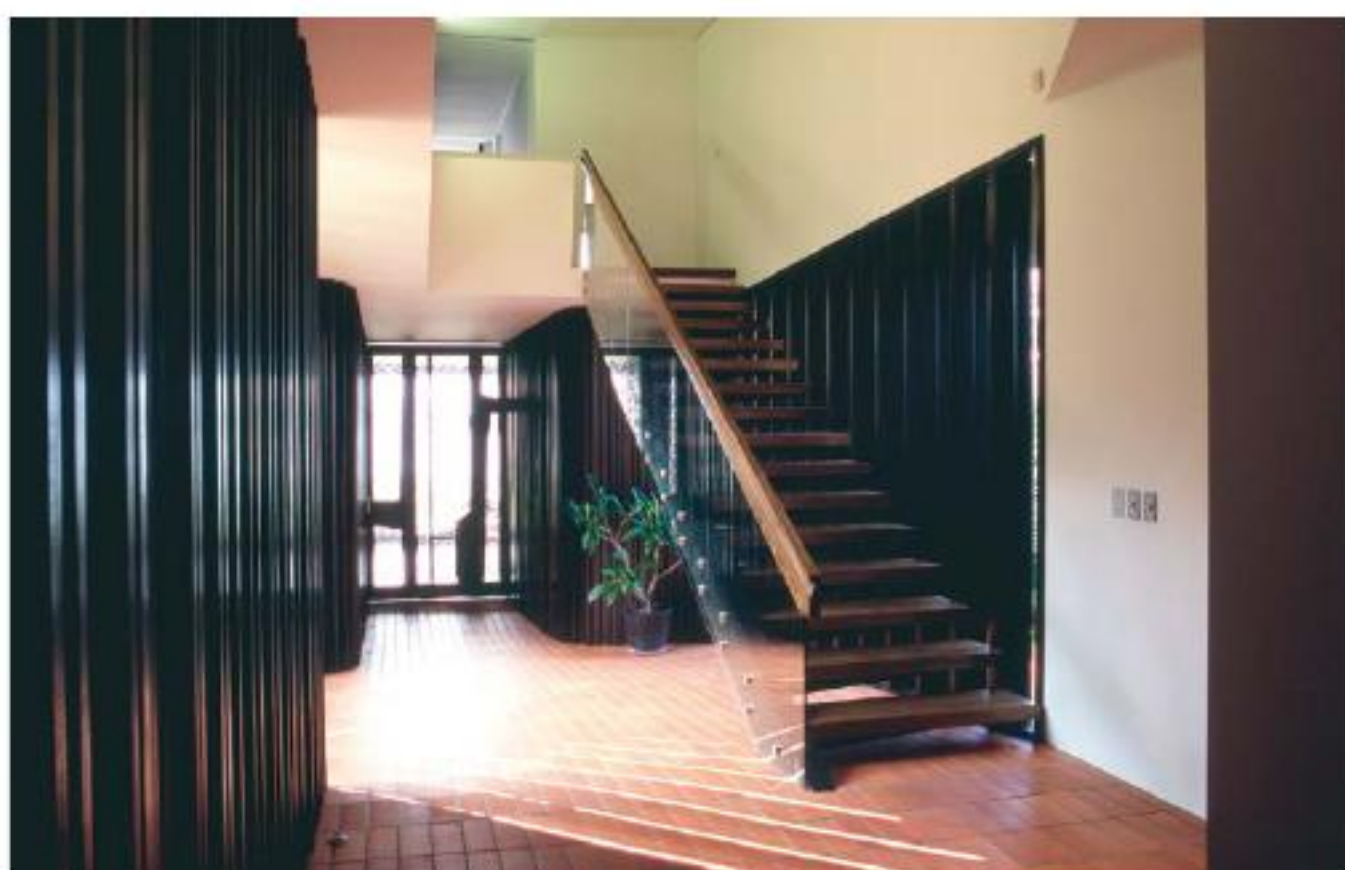
The house has been designed to replace a small and ramshackle house whose previous owner had covered almost the entire site in concrete. The new design sought to establish an interesting connection between architecture and landscape through a series of courtyards, lush gardens and an integrated approach to the formal qualities of the architecture and landscape design.

The sculptural main form twists and ramps-up from the discrete street frontage over a cluster of organic 'pod' forms containing bedrooms, a lounge and kitchen. The main living spaces and circulation areas are seemingly held between these pod forms,

giving a relaxed air and fluidity to the spaces. Dark timbers and terracotta combine with ramping floors, sunken seating areas and hidden doors to offer a rich, playful interior.

The home also features extensive built-in furniture, shelving units and a sculptural cantilevered staircase. Stretching out along the narrow site and opening onto a series of intimate courtyards, the house stops short of the sea to form a private waterside oasis.

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## Get enlightened

By Ann-Marie Appleton

### LED

This is one of those trends that make perfect sense. When total energy costs are considered over the long term, LED lighting is both more affordable and more practical than other alternatives.

While the upfront costs for LED lighting do tend to be higher, the overall energy costs associated with LED lighting are considerably lower when calculated over an entire lifespan of use.

If you're a homeowner, you can get in on this trend by evaluating and budgeting for a switch to LED lighting in your home. This is one of those tangible investments that you can both enjoy now and profit from in the long term.

Residential designers have reported an upswing in demand for LED lighting, particularly in the kitchen and bathroom. LED cabinet lighting and inside drawers is in especially strong demand - when you open a drawer or cabinet, the light inside is triggered to instantly turn on.

There's also significant interest in outdoor LED lighting. As clients embrace the trend towards outdoor living, many are revamping their patios, porches, driveways and garden areas with additional lighting. LED strip lighting is also trending upwards.

### Pendant

Pendant lighting is a hot item at the moment. Some in-demand pendant lighting draws inspiration from the past, while other styles are uniquely contemporary in design. Bowl pendants and drum pendants are both important

silhouettes. Multi-light pendants are another important category, with many trend-setters choosing to incorporate several fixtures into their interior designs.

### Chandeliers

Chandeliers are still popular and there are a couple of clear trends emerging.

First, there's significant demand for value-priced contemporary chandeliers that don't compromise on style. Mini-chandeliers fit into this category, with dazzling small sized options being just right for limited size spaces such as apartments, smaller rooms, attic bedrooms and guest suites.

Chandeliers aren't just for dining rooms any more - we're seeing them surface just about everywhere, from kitchens and bathrooms to laundry rooms.

### Copper trend

Warm metals are trendy for 2015 and they're making appearances in many places throughout the home. Many of our lighting suppliers are getting in on the trend, offering a variety of lovely copper-colored pendant lights and various copper sconces and lamps.

### Wall sconces

Wall sconce lighting serves the dual purpose of providing ambient light and making a design statement.

### Decorative bulbs

Perhaps it's a backlash against the new LEDs, or maybe it's just a nod to the past, but the old fashioned Edison style light bulb

is a trend that shows no sign of stopping. These vintage style bulbs look great in exposed light fixtures and add an instant warm industrial vibe to any room.

### Shower

The shower is usually more than just a place to get clean and energised, it is also a place for grooming as well. So if you perform activities like shaving as part of your everyday showering ritual, a dedicated functional light will make life much easier.

The simplest solution is to add one or two recessed spotlights in the ceiling above the shower. This will give you the extra light you need to make tasks like shaving go smoother than ever.

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](http://www.frobisher.co.nz)

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# Kitchen design trends in 2015

What's hot and what you need to know

Here in New Zealand we are very fortunate - not only do we have access to the emerging kitchen design and colour trends from Europe, but we have excellent local designers who are extremely capable of not only interpreting those trends, but who also have the ability to add their very own "New Zealand" touch to their designs.

## COLOUR

While a neutral kitchen palette still tends to form the basis for most looks, we are constantly seeing this look revived with spots of colour - be it the very bright hues, from the citrus orange and yellows, the turquoise and vibrant sea blues - to the pastel trends of soft egg-shell blues, sage greens and baby pinks, all

of which were apparent at the London Design Week recently.

Accent colours can be added to a neutral kitchen in several ways. You can use colourful accessories and bar stools to feature panels and open shelving, or by having items that can be changed in the future if you tire of the colour, or it doesn't appeal to a new owner.



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Sitting comfortably in that neutral palette are a myriad of colours ranging from the whites, through to whitish creams and the soft taupes and certainly we are seeing a lot of soft/fog type greys coming through which, when matched with a concrete look alike benchtop, give a very smart, urbane look.

Some of the whites appearing now have more of a blue hue to them, many with a slight translucent or shiny effect. Hi-gloss board is grabbing attention at the moment if a very "avant-garde" sleek effect is what you are after however, the matt and satin finish boards always remain on trend and will deliver a more enduring look.

### WOOD

Timber is still being seen in many kitchens either as an accent or as a total look. Consider timber accents used as floating shelves, detailed panels or overlaying timber onto a stone or laminate top. Remember - a myriad of materials can be used nowadays within the same space - it's about getting the right balance in both texture and colour that counts and a skilled designer will be more than happy to guide you through this.

### DESIGN TRENDS

More than ever before, the kitchen is now the central core of the household with many containing computer, study, television and Skype areas. In Europe, many are predicting the demise of the traditional dining room in favour of eating in the kitchen area with lower, layered tables emerging from the main bench.

For New Zealanders, the "galley" kitchen - or variations of - is still a favourite for its ease of use which suits our casual relaxed lifestyle. Overall looks range from the glossy and sleek

to modern country, retro, industrial and everything in between.

With so much to think about for your new project, it's essential you get the right advice before you embark. Many joinery and kitchen companies have in-house kitchen designers who work exclusively for that company, while there are also some excellent and highly skilled independent designers in New Zealand.

Many, in both these categories, are members of the National Kitchen and Bathroom Association (NKBA) - a New Zealand wide professional group of designers,

“

Remember - this is your kitchen, your project - be informed, get some great style and planning advice from trained professionals and you'll be thrilled with the outcome.

”

manufacturers and suppliers. All members of the NKBA will have their membership certificate displayed in their premises.

So do some ground work, know what you like and what you don't like, have an idea of your budget and what you'd like to achieve and keep some photographs of any kitchens which instantly appeal to you - even if it's just one feature.

Remember - this is your kitchen, your project - be informed, get some great style and planning advice from trained professionals and you'll be thrilled with the outcome.

.....  
*Article by Trish Frankland, chairperson of the Canterbury Chapter National Kitchen and Bathroom Association*



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# DIY or tradespeople?

When building or renovating, somewhere along the line sanitary plumbing, gasfitting or drainlaying will need to be done.

There are very few tasks you can do yourself. For most, you will need to call a professional.

Know your limits. While it can be tempting to partake in the Kiwi spirit of DIY, if the job is done incorrectly things can go horribly wrong and become costly.

Why? Because high safety risks exist in the industry and it is illegal to do a lot of this work in New Zealand unless you have authorisation.

There are big fines associated with illegal work. For example, unauthorised sanitary plumbing work carries a maximum fine of \$10,000, and unauthorised gasfitting carries a maximum fine of \$50,000.

It is better to hire a professional and get the job done properly the first time around than to make costly mistakes.

Work carried out by unauthorised people can cause injury, loss of life and disease, as well as damage to property. Homeowners should also be aware that unauthorised work may also affect their insurance policy.

The Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (PGDB) was put in place to protect public health and safety and ensure tradespeople in these fields are authorised and doing this work competently. Tradespeople must undergo extensive training to enter and remain in this industry.



To avoid expensive mistakes join other savvy Kiwi homeowners who are taking the right steps. Always ask for the card.

The PGDB's key message for consumers is to 'Ask for the Card'—check to see if a person is authorised to work by asking to see their card. Tradespeople are required to have this authorisation card with them to show to consumers.

The card provides confidence you are hiring a competent tradesperson. Always check the expiry date to see that the

authorisation is current. Check the icons on the front to ensure that the person is permitted to do the type of work they are doing.

Consumers can also check up on the authorisation of tradespeople by searching the Board's online public register, or find out their DIY limits at [www.pgdb.co.nz](http://www.pgdb.co.nz). Request a copy of the helpful consumer guide.

If you are still unsure give the Board a call on 0800 743 262, there are technical advisors available to assist.

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# Quick fixes for cold, draughty homes

**Winter proofing your home needn't be as complex and expensive as you might think.**

Christian Hoerning from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) says it's hard to keep a draughty house warm and comfortable, but the problems are usually fairly cheap and easy to fix.

Spending a few hours draught proofing your home will pay off with a warmer, cosier home when winter's bite really arrives.

One of the first steps is to check hinges and catches or latches. If they are loose, tighten them up. Weather stripping can be used to seal gaps around many doors or windows and it's easy to use. If you get draughts from around door or window trims, seal behind them with clear or paintable sealant.

For gaps under doors, you can fit draught excluders, either brush strip types or for external doors, spring loaded automatic seals. Damaged rubber seals around aluminium joinery can easily be replaced.

If you have an unused fireplace you will get a lot of draughts. Block the chimney with a rubbish bag filled with shredded newspapers, or you can buy inflatable bags. Make sure no one tries to light the fire with a blocked chimney.

If you have holes in floorboards, cover from underneath with a small square of timber.

Unsealed skirting boards and cornices can be dealt with by using flexible silicon-based or latex sealants to seal the top and bottom of skirting boards and cornices, or remove them and foam the gap where the floor and wall or the ceiling and wall meet.

People may be surprised to learn there are gaps around electrical wiring and plumbing passages through walls, floors and ceilings. Seal using silicone sealants (for smaller gaps), or polyurethane foam for bigger gaps. These passages are often hidden so don't forget to look behind kitchen and bathroom cabinetry and inside wardrobes and hot water cupboards.

Air leakage and heat loss can be a real problem with older style recessed downlights. Most downlights installed until mid-2012 cannot be sealed or covered, as it could cause a fire hazard, so holes are required in insulation to create a safety gap. The best solution is to replace these old style downlights with modern IC or IC-F rated LED downlights that can be insulated over, or removing them altogether. Surface mounted or suspended light fittings allow you to plug

the holes in the ceiling and can be insulated right over.

If your house isn't insulated or the insulation is old or needs topping up, you will struggle to stay warm. If you can do it safely, get a step-ladder and peek through the hatch of your ceiling into your roof space to see if you have insulation.

## **Add a top-up layer of insulation if it:**

- Is less than 12 cm thick (it should be thicker than the height of the ceiling joists)
- Doesn't cover the whole ceiling
- Has gaps in it, or places where it is squashed or tucked in.

Check under your house – if you have old ripped foil insulation (don't touch this as there is a small risk it could be live) or old bulk insulation, you will need to get it replaced.



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# Simple steps for a warm winter

It's thought that as many as 600,000 New Zealand houses are lacking adequate ceiling or underfloor insulation – and even those with existing insulation can find it less effective over time.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority estimates 45 percent of homes suffer from mould caused by too much moisture, which in turn is associated with health problems including asthma, eczema and headaches.

However, a few simple precautions leading into the chilly season could see you right, says Stan from Mitre 10 Easy As.

"The key is to take a three-pronged approach," Stan says. "You need to insulate, ventilate, and heat.

"Almost half of your household heat is lost through the roof, so having proper insulation in the ceiling cavity is essential to trap this heat and make the most of it. Make sure

you have good thermal insulation in your wall cavity also, and don't forget simple but effective actions such as drawing the curtains to keep heat in and installing weather and door strips.

"To combat excessive humidity, invest in a good dehumidifier. Bringing down the moisture levels in your home will also make it unfriendly to dust mites and in turn help allergy sufferers.

"While it might seem contradictory, opening windows to allow air to circulate will also help to lower moisture. Signs you need to get a dehumidifier include condensation on windows, musty smells, rotting wood and wet stains on walls and ceilings.

"And finally, heat your home thoroughly. New Zealanders tend to hold back from heating in order to save money or energy, which doesn't work in the long run for the overall health of you and your family.

"Plus there are a whole raft of heating options that will suit different needs and budgets. If you've got a wood fire, remember to get the chimney checked

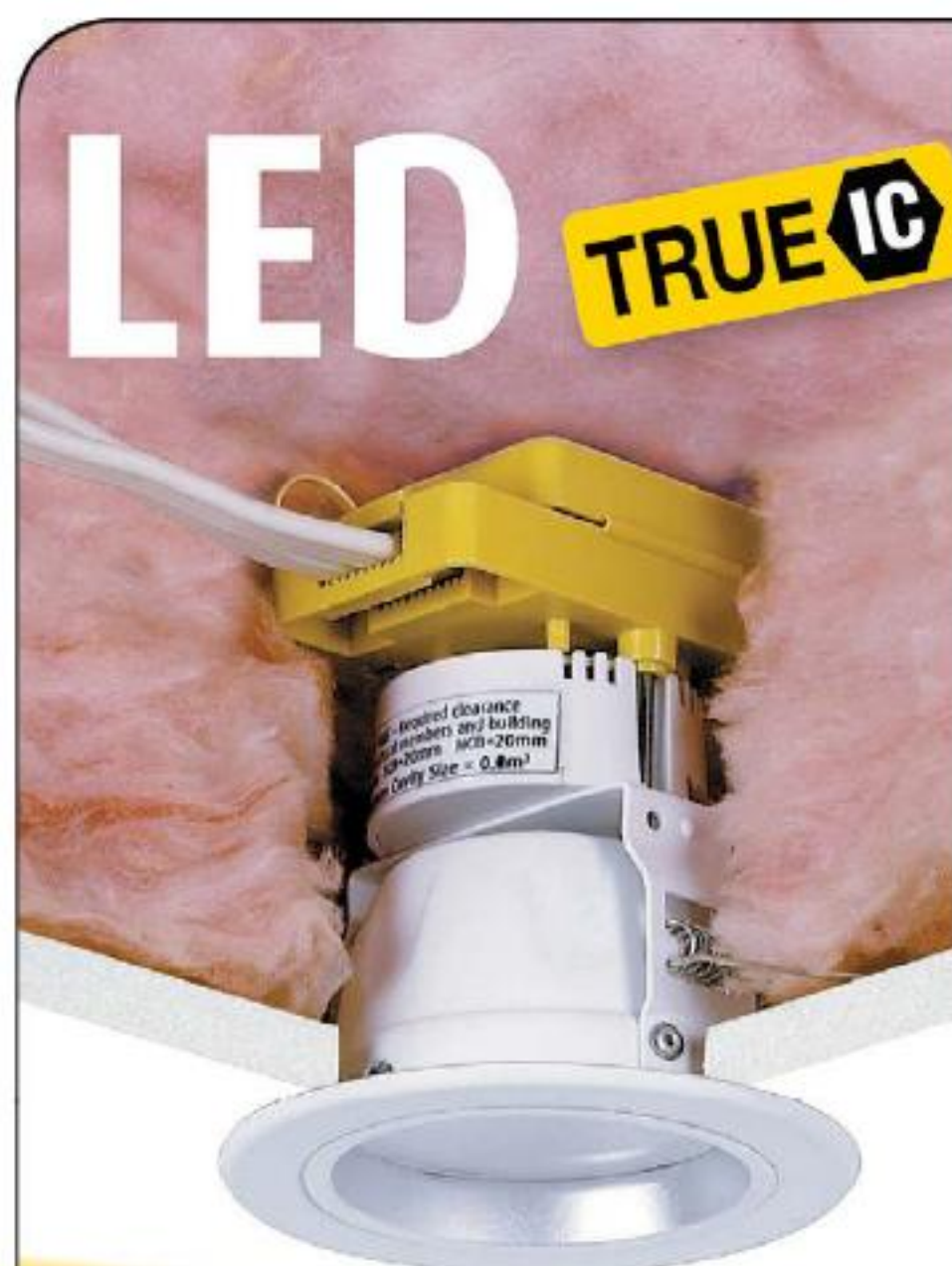
and cleaned before winter. If you're opting for a heat pump, get it installed by a registered electrician.

"And don't forget that with the cold season comes fire risk – so make sure you have smoke alarms installed and that you test them regularly," Stan says.

To help New Zealanders stay warm in winter, Mitre 10 has a number of clips on its YouTube channel focussed on reducing home heat loss. General manager marketing, Dave Elliott says at this time of year there is a rise in people watching these.

"Our guide on how to reduce home heat loss has had quite a spike already this season, and the larger insulation project guides have lifted too," Dave says. "This is really positive. It's great to see people willing to get stuck in to DIY and looking to us for advice. It's in line with our research findings and showing us we're on the right track."

For further information on how to reduce home heat loss, see the Mitre 10 Easy As guide at [www.mitre10.co.nz](http://www.mitre10.co.nz)

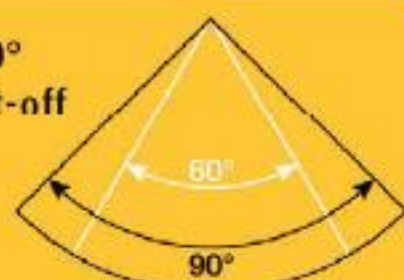


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# The ultra-low emission log burner

German precision engineering with a dash of Kiwi ingenuity - that is the best way to describe the newly authorised ultra-low emission log burners, the Xeoos Twinfire® X8.

These amazing log burners are available throughout New Zealand under the existing clean air rules but were brought here with Canterbury in mind.

Available for new and existing homes in Christchurch, Rangiora and Kaiapoi Clean Air Zones 1, either with or without a current log fire, these stunning, contemporary units are a perfect statement heat source.

The concept behind the Xeoos Twinfire® X8 range is a process called gasification. It converts carbon-based materials, which in this case is wood, into combustible gases, principally carbon monoxide and hydrogen, by heating the solid fuel at high temperatures with a controlled amount of oxygen. The result of the gasification process is a highly efficient heat producer with a minimal amount of pollution.

The fire is started in the upper burning chamber. When enough flames and heat have built up to over 980 degrees Celsius, the handle is pressed down and the heated gases pull down into the lower chamber and ignite into a blazing fire.

These gases are reheated to create an almost total combustion with low emission rate of 0.45 grams per kilogram of fuel, the lowest rate of any authorised ultra-low burner.

They are also the only ultra-low emission log burner with two heat settings, a high and low.

The result is a fire on top of a fire, with an amazing visual presence that is both practical and economical to run.

These units are perfect for heating up to 100 sqm assuming a 2.5m high ceiling.

We have teamed up with Tropicair Heating at 34 Sandford Street where we have three

models available to view with one being a working model.

Prices range from \$6,500 for the Solo upto \$10,950 for the Matten with its stunning oak wood box.

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# Breathing easy this winter

Asthma New Zealand's Breathe Easy programme recognises products, such as Autex Industries' GreenStuf insulation, that are beneficial for people with asthma. All Breathe Easy approved products have been developed by reputable companies who are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of their customers.

Asthma New Zealand provides free advice, information and products to families affected by asthma. They offer simple, effective strategies to help manage asthma, and work alongside GPs to educate and support local communities towards better health outcomes, helping to prevent long term damage and illnesses like Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which can arise as a result of uncontrolled asthma symptoms.

The Breathe Easy programme allows people with asthma and other respiratory conditions to make informed choices to keep themselves, their families and their homes healthy, while recognising the integrity of trusted New Zealand brands.

Autex Industries is one of the selected suppliers Asthma New Zealand has partnered with to help people with asthma choose products to allow them healthier lifestyles. Autex Industries' innovative GreenStuf insulation has been independently assessed by Asthma New Zealand, and is considered to be safer for Kiwis living with asthma.

Made from 100 percent pure polyester, GreenStuf insulation is the leader in environmentally friendly insulation. It's made in New Zealand using recycled content and is also recyclable at the end of its life, so it's great for our environment.

GreenStuf users will experience better indoor air quality, as it doesn't contain

any added chemicals or fibres that can be breathed into the lungs - a must for those with respiratory conditions. It's also safe to the touch and doesn't require any protective clothing to handle.

Asthma New Zealand's Breathe Easy partnership programme allows businesses to demonstrate their point of difference, and have their products recognised by those in the health industry.

Breathe Easy partners are given priority when advertising in Asthma New Zealand's quarterly O2 magazine, which is read by over 6,000 people, including many in education and healthcare.

If you're interested in getting involved in the Breathe Easy programme, contact Linda Thompson, chief executive of Asthma New Zealand, at (09) 623 0236, or email [LindaT@asthma.org.nz](mailto:LindaT@asthma.org.nz)

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# Setting the scene

By Katie Costain and Ben Freeman



Ben Freeman and Katie Costain give a couple of quick landscape design tips.

## Colour and tone

If you are looking for "wow" appeal, then use colour; lots of colour. But make sure you use it correctly. Start with a colour theme that suits your personal style, the architecture of your house and one that showcases your garden with a rich, saturation of colour.

There are plenty of websites and online resources that explain colour theory and colour wheels. But even using the tones of a colour can induce a dramatic effect. Using lighter colours in dense spaces and darker colours behind rich coloured plants enhances the colour of feature planting.

Colour is important in other elements of your landscape, from the colour of the deck stain to the colour of stone pavers. These are all elements that one must consider when designing and how these colours relate to one another.

## Repetition, proportion and balance

Repetition can be a great way to create texture, movement and hierarchy in your garden. If you are a keen gardener, you may have heard

the rule of planting in odd numbers, more specifically to plant in threes.

Odd as it may sound; there is a reason why odd numbers look good. A single plant is a feature. One either side of this makes a frame. This is not just a gardener's moniker, but a rule used in design - the rule of thirds.

“

Repetition can be a great way to create texture, movement and hierarchy in your garden.

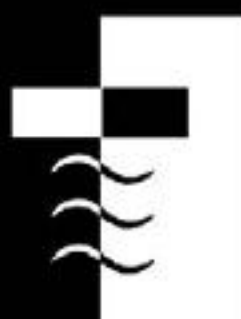
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This rule also helps in finding proportion. Consider a potted plant; it looks best when the plant is a third of the overall size of the pot. While this rule is generally appropriated to visual design, it is a golden rule to follow when considering repetition of elements in your design or planning on creating a feature in your garden. Most designers believe there is a balance in three's that is more harmonious than pairs.

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](http://www.bgla.co.nz)



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# Time to get an expert?

Often defects in buildings are minor and your local builder can fix them in a few days with a minimum of trouble.

But in some cases things are not that easy. Imagine you find water staining your carpet under the lounge window. No one left the window open, so it can't be that. And what is that cracking throughout the plaster outside? You call your builder and he says that all you need to do is paint over it, which doesn't sound like the right answer to you. What if it is something more? But if so, how big is it and what can you do?

So who can you ask to help work out if the problem is serious, or nothing to get concerned about? How do you move forward and protect your house?

## Think through the following points:

1. If there is a serious defect and damage has been caused to your home, it is there because something has gone wrong in the building process - something has happened that shouldn't have.

2. You need someone to check out the problem. Someone who can see the issue from all angles, someone who knows about constructing a building right, has the training to understand building science, knows how materials should be used, how water, wind and seismic events can effect a house, knows the building laws and regulations and knows about repair costs.

3. Maybe this problem will not go away quickly, not for just a few thousand dollars. You need someone who can follow through. Perhaps the best way forward is

the court, or another dispute resolution process. You need a technical expert who works in this environment and whose quality of investigation, evidence gathering and reporting can help you through the remedial process.

In cases like these you need to have the very best information and advice available and someone that can guide you to any other assistance you may need, because that expert has the experience of many similar situations where they have helped others along the way with similar problem buildings.

What all this boils down to, is that you need to get a technical expert and get the most qualified people in this field; find a Registered Building Surveyor.

Members of the New Zealand Institute of Building Surveyors

(NZIBS) have been at the forefront in the discovery of the leaky building crisis since the mid-1990s. Their members work in all areas of building defect assessment and remediation of building defects. NZIBS members are sought after as independent and court experienced expert witnesses, involving disputes around building defects.



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Article provided by Frank Wiemann, member of the executive, New Zealand Institute of Building Surveyors.



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# Rebuilding & Recycling



As our city becomes a canvas of new homes, one building company is ensuring we are preserving some of the history and character that has gone before.



"There is something really special about relocating a home," shares Grant Laing with a smile. "We all have emotional connections with our homes and by opting for relocation rather than demolition, you can ensure that emotional connection is transferred to someone else. That your much loved home is getting a new lease on life."

Founded by Grant, Laing Properties have been relocating and building homes across the South Island for over twenty-five years, and are all too familiar with

the trials and tribulations of our current building environment. Passionate about Christchurch and its future, this family business is committed to meeting the highest of standards in every aspect of their work.

"There are a number of homeowners facing TC3 rebuilds," continues Grant Laing. "What we can offer, is the unique opportunity to buy or sell-on-behalf the existing home, and then work with the client to build an affordable, architecturally designed new home that works for them."

As well as those requiring rebuilds, there are a number of discerning homeowners facing extensive repairs. "We grow out of our homes and for some the quakes have presented an opportunity to invest in our futures. For those facing TC3 repairs this could be an investment to recycle and rebuild."

"Relocating and recycling your home, allows you to stay on the site which you love, but in a home that better suits your lifestyle," shares Myles Laing.

Myles heads up Laing's latest offering and brings an unsurpassed passion and dedication to building. "Our homes aren't just buildings or a place to reside, they are an expression of how you choose to live," shares Myles. "And by doing so on a site in which you already reside, it can be a seamless

approach from old to new, all without changing your address."

Able to select the floor plan which best suits your needs, or undertake a bespoke design, Myles Laing New Builds ensure the possibilities of home building are not only vast, but well within the reach of Cantabrians. "Every product and service is provided by people we trust, and every finish is one we can be proud of," concludes Myles. "One of the key points of difference is that we walk away knowing our homes are future-proofed through design, technology and practicality."

From relocating your old home, to organising site clearance, to the design and construction of your brand new home, Laing Properties is a one-stop shop when it comes to all of your home building needs.



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# Delivering form and function

It doesn't matter whether you're renovating or building a new home, you want the finished article to look as good as possible, and to function perfectly.

And one area where this is vital is for your home's joinery. Exterior and interior joinery are premium products, which require a level of protection to enhance the properties of the products. It is therefore important that you take your time in selecting who designs, manufactures and advises on care and maintenance.

This is why using a Registered Master Joiner is vital. Registered Master Joiners provide full consultation and design services for all joinery needs and work closely with other design professionals to ensure that the finished product looks and functions at its best.

National and regional members are kept up to date with the latest trends both in craft practice and business developments. Through its members, the New Zealand Joinery Manufacturers' Federation is also a prime mover in the introduction of innovations and standards to the joinery industry.

Registered Master Joiners bring innovation to the joinery industry. They encourage

competition and the pursuit of excellence between and from its members, their employees and apprentices.

## What to look for in a joiner

As a joiner is capable of working within several different areas of the home, it is a good idea to have a chat with your joiner and see what things they specialise in.

For example, some joiners may work exclusively in cabinetry and shelving, while others may specialise in more decorative timber work such as architraves and mouldings. This is important as you want to hire a joiner that has a lot of experience in the particular area that you need.

As well as this, you'll also want to hire a joiner that can work to a reasonable time-frame and to a reasonable price. To achieve this, you'll need to sit down with your joiner and tell them all the details of your project. Once they know this, they'll be able to accurately estimate the cost of the project as well as the time that it will take.

Whether renovating or rebuilding, don't take a gamble with a major investment in your home – the best kitchens and cabinetry don't just happen. It makes sense to consult a professional for the planning, manufacture and installation in your home.

Registered Master Joiners provide this certainty.

To find a Registered Master Joiner in your area, check out the website [www.masterjoiners.co.nz](http://www.masterjoiners.co.nz) or contact the executive officer, Corinne Moore, for information. Call (06) 844 9954 or email: [info@masterjoiners.co.nz](mailto:info@masterjoiners.co.nz).



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# Think like a thief



Put yourself in a burglar's shoes. If you 'think like a thief' you will be able to identify signs of security weaknesses in your home.

- Lock your doors and windows
- Record the serial numbers of expensive electronic items and photograph these and other valuables
- Keep valuables out of sight i.e. jewellery, cameras, electronic games
- Keep garden sheds and garages locked when not in use and ensure ladders are stored away from sight
- Consider investing in an alarm system, or getting sensor lights fitted
- Keep the house secure when you are out in the garden or the yard
- Check for weak spots where a thief could get into your garden, for example, a low or sagging fence, or a back gate with a weak lock
- Keep hedges or plants around doors and windows well trimmed – don't give burglars a place to hide
- Use a chain on the door – don't open the door to strangers, unless the chain is attached
- Note down registrations of any suspicious vehicles – often burglars will scope out a place beforehand
- Join or form a Neighbourhood Support Group. Your Community Constable will have details
- Register serial numbers on the SNAP website [www.snap.org.nz](http://www.snap.org.nz).

#### When going on holiday:

- Make arrangements for your mail and newspaper to be stopped or collected by a neighbour or friend
- Hide valuable items, financial documents and spare keys to vehicles etc
- Set timer switches on lights and/or radio.

If a crime is being committed, or you see something suspicious and the offenders are still there or have just left, call 111 immediately.

Information courtesy of New Zealand Police. Visit: [www.police.govt.nz](http://www.police.govt.nz)

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# Taking concrete steps

By Rob Gaimster

There are many concrete solutions for residential construction being used in Canterbury. These include masonry blocks, precast panels and Insulated Concrete Formwork (ICF), in which hollow reinforced polystyrene blocks are filled with concrete and plastered to provide a structural wall system.

It is however, the humble slab that is the most widely used concrete solution for residential construction.

The attraction of the concrete slab extends beyond value for money and durability. The role its mass plays in a passive solar design is also appreciated. By using concrete's mass with the sun's heat along with natural ventilation, more comfortable living conditions can be achieved with reduced reliance on space heating or cooling.

An exposed, insulated concrete floor absorbs, stores and later radiates the sun's heat, offsetting temperature peaks and troughs, to create a moderate living environment.

There are proprietary slab systems available. Offering a stiffer and stronger final product than a conventional 100mm slab, the "waffle" or "raft" design creates a concrete grid between voids, typically polystyrene blocks. These slabs "float" on the ground, assisting their



seismic performance. Concrete slab systems for TC3 land are also available.

Several changes to the New Zealand Building Code have been made since the Canterbury earthquakes that strengthen

concrete slab's position. Specifically, all concrete floor slabs for timber framed buildings constructed on 'good ground' must contain seismic grade reinforcing mesh, and perimeter foundations must be tied to the slab.

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These updated regulations, combined with the benefits outlined above, along with fire resistance, sound control, and a huge range of attractive finishes, will see residential property owners across Canterbury well served by concrete slabs.

#### Commercial construction

Office buildings are becoming the main feature of the central city's construction landscape. The areas west of the Avon in the central city, and Victoria Street, Lincoln Road or Moorhouse Avenue have seen the most activity.

As awareness of the ground conditions across the city has become more sophisticated, the use of concrete in robustly engineered foundation designs will ensure commercial buildings rest on a firm footing.

Damage resistant design solutions that use reinforced

concrete, such as PREcast Seismic Structural System (PRESSS) and base isolation, will gain uptake among building designers as knowledge grows.

#### The next concrete step

With residential construction continuing apace, along with commercial and civil projects being completed and coming on stream, the design versatility and inherent properties of concrete will play a major part in ensuring the Canterbury built environment is attractive, robust and safe.

Rob Gaimster is the chief executive of the Cement & Concrete Association of New Zealand (CCANZ)



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