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IN THIS ISSUE
STAIRCASES
HEATING
WINDOWS
& DOORS



STAIRCASES



HEATING



WINDOWS & DOORS

CROSSWAY: THE UK'S FIRST RETROSPECTIVELY CERTIFIED PASSIVHAUS

ACCESSORISE FOR MAXIMUM
EFFICIENCY AND COMFORT

Even after you have selected the perfect heating set up for your new home, there are plenty of accessories to choose from





Heating accessories will help to integrate the system into your home, further enhance efficiency as well as make things that bit cosier.

Some are modern inventions, others are classic add-ons that really create those homely touches...

Carpets and rugs underfoot

As absorbers of warmth, carpets and rugs are a great addition to homes, particularly in bedrooms and living areas where having warm, soft flooring beneath your feet in winter is one of life's little luxuries.

As Rupert Anton, spokesperson at carpet industry body The Carpet Foundation, points out: "Carpet can ensure a toastier room as it is heat retentive – 15 per cent of all household heat disappears through uninsulated floors, but not with carpet and underlay."

Mr Anton adds that it is important to consider how much the carpet will contribute to insulating rooms, which will depend on its thickness, the fabric(s) used and also which type or types of heating systems you have.

"The higher the tog rating, the more insulating the carpet – and remember that carpet can be fitted over underfloor heating systems," he says.

There are several practical and safety considerations to examine when choosing a carpet though. Carpets will need to be fire rated, and it is generally a good idea not to have them installed close to fireplaces or in

wet areas where constant soaking can damage both the carpet and the flooring underneath.

Also consider hypo-allergenic versions if you or anyone in your family suffer from allergies. Some fabrics, pile lengths and carpet styles more easily collect dust and dirt, which can work its way down into the fabric and become difficult to vacuum out. Carpets are made from a variety of materials and blends, including wool, nylon and polypropylene.

Finally, be careful to pay close attention to the colour and style of the carpet you choose, because it is much more difficult, not to mention expensive, to replace carpets as fashions change than it is to simply give the walls a new lick of paint in a different shade.

"Fashion colours, patterns and textures have been migrating from the catwalk into our homes for some time, but it is now happening quicker than ever before. Everything is completely intertwined," says Joanna Ramsden, creative manager at Wools of New Zealand.

"Fashion in the home is so strong now. Colour is coming from all avenues and people are a lot bolder. There is no right or wrong. People are not frightened of it now and are happy to live with what they want.

"As far as the future goes, I forecast green, in all its varieties from leaf to jade will be to the fore. It is sophisticated and liveable, and gives a feeling of energy and vitality."

The other option is to use rugs instead of carpets. Rugs have several benefits over fixed carpet, including the fact they can be

taken outside for cleaning and you can also incorporate different colours, patterns and styles to suit different rooms.

Kids' rooms are a prime example of this, where colourful and playful rugs can be incorporated into the design without being a permanent fixture that may detract from the property should you decide to sell it or as the kids grow up and their tastes change.

Harlequin, for example, now has a range of rugs designed by Dutch rug manufacturer Brink and Campman, with patterns from its popular children's collections 'What a Hoot' and 'All About Me'. The designs come in two sizes, 90cm by 140cm and 120cm by 180cm, and include the following designs:

- Abacus: a graphic, multi-coloured representation of the beads on an abacus.
- Boogie Woogie: a stripe-within-a-stripe in a glorious palette of colours.
- Funky Flower: a cut-out flower in a combination of colours, appealing to girls of all ages.
- Go Go Retro: as its name suggests, a retro-inspired design featuring vintage cars and scooters.
- Home Tweet Home: an enchanting nursery design, featuring birds tweeting in their houses.
- Polly Pirouette: a cheerful ballerina sprinkled with hearts.
- Reggie Robot: a computer-styled character lit up with pops of colour.
- What A Hoot: an endearing owl in his woodland habitat.



A door that's more than a door

A common concern for home builders is how to ensure windows and doors are properly sealed from drafts, to avoid that precious warm air escaping out into the cold. However a new door developed by Urban Front has just achieved Passive House Certification.

The E98 Passiv door is highly insulated, made with a steel reinforced core achieving up to 0.8W/m²K and 32db sound insulation with an airtightness up to class 3. The doors are made with triple rebates, steel reinforcement and various bespoke sizing going up to a maximum of 1100mm wide and 2200mm high.

Overall, the door leaf thickness is 98mm, with a natural solid wood exterior and interior leaf of 20mm.

Urban Front has designed the eco-friendly door to suit contemporary homes, and is available in all of its hardwood timbers including iroko, European oak, American black walnut, fumed oak and wenge.

Door decorations and extras can also be incorporated into the door, including automatic door closers, electronic cylinders, a reversible electric latch and an array of locks, from multipoint and fire exit quick release locks through to sophisticated fingerprint entry systems with fully automated locks.

Hot water on tap

Getting instant hot water in the kitchen is a delight for any home chef, which is why boiling water taps are making their way from workplace kitchenettes into home kitchens.

Quooker Fusion has recently released a combined hot and cold mixer plus boiling water tap in one. The latest addition to Quooker's recently launched and rapidly growing Nordic series, the Fusion makes



instantaneous boiling water even more accessible to the nation's kitchens, while freeing up precious workspace.

"The boiling water tap has been perceived as something of a luxury, although once people have one installed, they tell us that it's a necessity and something they would never be without," says Stephen Johnson, UK managing director for Quooker.

"The Quooker Fusion, as a single product combining hot, cold and boiling water, saves purchasing a separate mixer tap and dedicated boiling water tap, so it makes opting for instantaneous boiling water a more affordable choice."

The Quooker Fusion comes in two styles, Nordic Round and Nordic Square, in choices of chrome or brushed chrome finish, and also includes 360-degree rotation of the spout, to deliver water exactly where it's needed with the maximum precision and safety.

Window dressings that double as a heat barrier

Window dressings are by no means anything new, serving to provide privacy to a home's occupants and keep rooms dark for sleeping or home entertainment. Yet increasingly blinds and curtains are playing a role in maintaining household energy efficiency, by insulating windows to keep heat in and cold out.

According to Blinds 2 Go, 80 per cent of energy used in homes is for heating yet even in today's well insulated homes, double-glazed windows can still lose as much as 40 per cent of heat generated.

Energy saving thermal blinds are a

significant step towards eradicating this heat loss, as they not only insulate the window but crucially allow free solar energy to be trapped in the first place. This could cut your heating bills by over 20 per cent, or at least £200 for a typical home

Thermal blinds will also effectively reflect the heat of the sun back out during the summer months, meaning they can play a substantial role in regulating internal temperatures year-round. They are also among the cheapest of energy saving measures you can incorporate into the home – Blinds 2 Go has blinds starting from just £15.

Radiators

You may not have considered radiators as helping to boost the heating efficiency of a home, but modern radiators can achieve substantial efficiency improvements when compared with older models.

"As we see increasing use of low-temperature heating systems, such as condensing boilers and renewables, high-output, low water content radiators need to be used to maximise efficiency," says Quinn Radiators panel product manager, Isabel Donovan.

"A radiator that uses less water at a lower temperature and less boiler energy means a more efficient heating system all-round".

Radiators which use a lower content are faster to heat and it goes without saying that less water requires less energy to generate heat, which is why low water content radiators are a good choice if you are keen to stay with this type of heat distribution.

Also look at how much of the radiator surface and convection fins make direct contact with the water, as this will give you a good indication of the amount of energy required to heat the radiator – i.e. those with more direct contact with water will require less energy to heat, and will be quicker to heat.

Think for the future

As this overview of home accessories shows, there are plenty of simple ways to further enhance the efficiency of a new home that won't break the bank. Many of these accessories are ones you would seek to include anyway, so by simply giving a bit of thought to what you are putting into your home, you could see certain accessories end up paying for themselves very quickly through energy savings.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

Carpet Foundation

www.carpetfoundation.com

Wools of New Zealand

www.woolsnz.com

Harlequin

www.harlequin.uk.com

Urban Front

www.urbanfront.co.uk

Quooker

www.quooker.co.uk

Blinds 2 Go

www.blinds-2go.co.uk

Quinn Radiators

www.quinn-radiators.co.uk

Carron Pheonix

www.carron.com

