

Most modern houses are fully insulated and some of the older houses have been either partially or completely insulated. Double windows are required in most areas during the winter and consequently until recently large window sizes tended to be impractical. However, recent developments have made possible the use of large, fixed, double-glazed glass areas. These are commonly referred as "picture windows." In luxury apartments room air conditioners are being introduced.

Central heating dispenses with the need for fireplaces, but they are still found in the more expensive types of new homes, as well as in parts of the country where winters are milder.

Plumbing and Electricity

While many of the older houses, particularly in rural areas, lack adequate plumbing facilities, almost all newer houses have indoor toilets and baths with showers. Copper has largely replaced steel or cast iron in water pipes and, naturally, in view of the severity of the climate, all pipes are located inside the house.

Electricity plays a key role in the Canadian housewife's life and most modern houses are fitted with 100-amp electrical circuits. Domestic circuits usually carry 110 volts and all appliances with the exception of electric stoves are geared to this voltage. The increase in the number of electrical appliances such as washing machines, television sets, floor polishers and miscellaneous kitchen gadgets has placed a heavy load on existing circuits in some older houses and extensive rewiring has been required.

Community Planning

It is perhaps inevitable that in a period of rapid growth more attention should be devoted to problems of planning. Certainly in recent years municipal governments have become more receptive to the ideas of town planners and many towns and cities have either added technically-qualified people to their staffs or have retained part-time consultants.

Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation has stimulated interest in good subdivision design and house grouping among builders and municipal officials. It has also helped to increase the number of trained professional planners, by offering scholarships and bursaries to encourage students to train for a planning career and by bringing trained planners to Canada from abroad.

CMHC also contributed to the setting up of the Community Planning Association of Canada, an organization which provides a focal point for those interested in planning problems. The problems themselves are immense. The opening up of new residential areas and the movement of commercial centres to outlying regions, either in response to new population groupings or to escape traffic congestion in downtown areas; have produced conditions of blight in many cities. Gradual deterioration of older residential districts even in comparatively new cities has also contributed to the need for rehabilitation and conservation. Although financial assistance for development is made available by the Federal Government, cities are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to plan present developments with care, particularly since population growth during the next 25 years threatens to accelerate greatly in many parts of the country.