

UK rediscovers the attractions of wood-frame houses

In Canada, there is a long tradition of building in wood, and Canadian-style wood-frame design and construction has been much admired in many countries around the world. One country which is benefitting from

Canada's experience is the UK, where wood-frame housing has started to make a major comeback after being subjected to some adverse publicity in 1983.

Solarhab by Interhabs Ltd of Halifax is based on the belief that the optimum house design begins with passive solar considerations.



Photo: Interhabs Ltd

Living in a country so abundant in forests, it is only natural that Canadians should choose to build houses of wood. Nowadays, some of the most cherished wood-based buildings from past centuries – from log cabins to elegant Victorian family houses – are being lovingly restored.

Wood features in many modern residential buildings, too, although it is often less conspicuous. For although the walls may be covered by other

materials, the framework of the house is constructed with standard dimension softwood lumber, designed for durability and erected by skilled carpenters on the building site. It is this wood framework which supports the floors and the roof.

This contrasts with the major method of house-building in the UK, where in a masonry or concrete house the support is provided by concrete breeze blocks.

Canada pioneers space systems continued —

launched so far. The firm was also responsible for Brazil's first domestic communications satellite which, together with ground control systems, serves a population of 130 million spread over 8.8 million square kilometres.

Other leading companies in space technology are MacDonald Dettwiler, a leading supplier of ground receiving and processing systems, and COM DEV whose equipment is currently in orbit in 35 satellites. Moreover, Canada's David Florida Laboratory is one of the few facilities in the world

able to simulate launch conditions and space environments. The European Space Agency's Olympus satellite is currently undergoing tests there.

Canada's contribution to space technology is being increasingly recognised. Recently the experimental satellite Hermes won the Canadian government, in conjunction with NASA, an Emmy television award for Engineering Excellence. With so much proven expertise to draw on, the Mobile Servicing System looks set to be another winner. ♣