



Not just a simple internal brick wall — this is a solid concrete 'heat bank' wall absorbing warmth during Winter.

Let's build energy efficiency in right from the start ~ and cut ongoing costs.

With your plans starting to take shape, it is now time to consider some really important issues that will have a huge bearing on the overall energy efficiency of your greatest asset, and its ongoing energy costs.

A very good web site to visit is www.nathers.gov.au. This site will give you an easy-to-understand outline on what energy efficiency is and how to achieve it. NATHers is the programme designed by the CSRIO that is used to calculate the Energy Rating on your new home using a Star rating system.

By law, all new homes in Queensland must achieve a 6 Star energy rating as a minimum. To achieve this, some designers simply put a fan in the outdoor area or PV cells on the roof — both of which equate to a one star bonus. Hardly genius, and seriously, they must think their customers are dills. If so, it means the best your home will actually achieve is a 5 Star rating, if that. Not much comfort if your goal is to save ongoing costs for heating and cooling.

You've got insulation? Are you sure?

Correct insulation and its placement is vital. You only get one chance to put insulation in the walls — at the frame stage. Check your builder has allowed for the right kind of insulation to be fitted in all external walls. While talking to your builder, check what type of foundations, built-in termite protection and termite-resistant materials your frame will be made from. It's important.

Even better is to do all this checking much earlier, at the quoting stage, because building quotes without the all-important insulation will appear deceptively cheaper. Meaning you'll pay, and pay, and pay for it later.

Some solutions are easy and simple

Simple things like putting insulation in the internal walls of your garage will stop

motor vehicle heat being transferred through them, as well as western Summer sun. Breeze and weather seals on all external doors will also have a large impact on heat loss and gain, yet are so cheap, simple and easy.



Thermal Mass ~ the Holy Grail

The thermal mass of a home is generally the concrete slab the home is sitting on, because of the density of concrete. It readily absorbs heat and slowly releases it, helping to keep your home's temperature more evenly balanced.

In our Satori, we've extended this concept by incorporating a solid concrete wall 'heat bank' within the home, retaining Winter's heat energy. Increased thermal mass can also be considered to increase your star ratings.

Finally, the right floor coverings can either deflect or stop the heat from being released too quickly from the slab. As always, you're welcome to talk to us about these things.

— Geoff Gibson

Look for this column in next month's Style...
we'll be talking about what building materials deliver the most efficient passive heating and cooling ~ meaning no on-going energy costs!

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518 Hume Street, Toowoomba
10am-5pm daily Friday to Tuesday (Closed Wed & Thurs)

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P: 07 4635 9049

M: 0417 458 733 Rick (Green Smart Accredited)



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OFFICE: 20 Stradbroke Street, Toowoomba (Off North St) | Office phone: 07 4634 4550
QBSA Lic. No. 100 5734 | www.geoffgibsonhomes.com.au | admin@geoffgibsonhomes.com.au