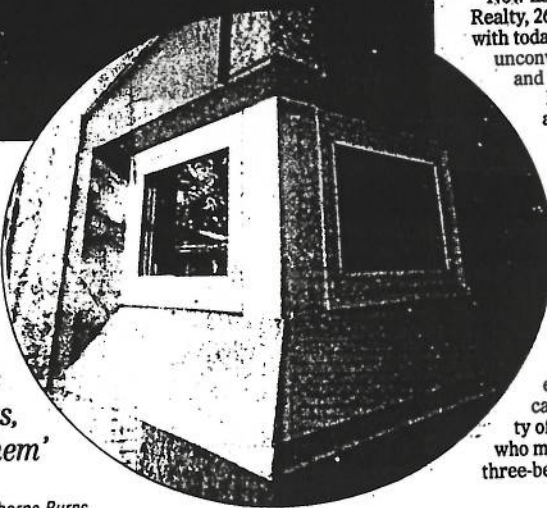
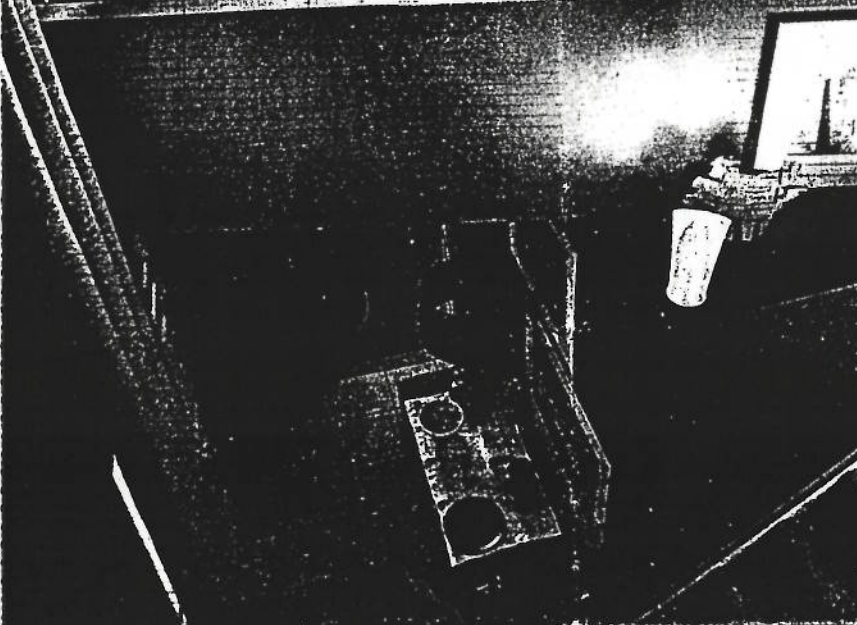


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A house for the times

Double walls, second-floor kitchen, electric heat — and tiny utility bills

By Lynne Harrison

'When I designed the house back in 1983, most people were laughing at what I did. But over the last couple of years, with my yearly costs the same as some people's monthly costs, I'm laughing at them'

—Architect and homeowner Gathorne Burns

WHEN Gathorne Burns designed his own home 18 years ago, his friends thought his ideas were off the wall. Who'd ever heard of a kitchen on the second floor? And why would anyone opt for electric heat?

But there was method to his madness, and years later, as the cost of natural gas began to go through the roof, it was Burns who had the last laugh. The use of electric baseboard heating, along with the home's double-wall construction, now leaves Burns with heating bills totaling \$300 dollars a year — approximately \$25 a month.

"The house is built to fantastically high energy standards," says Burns, "When I designed the house back in 1983, most people were laughing at what I did. But over the last couple of years, with my yearly costs the same as some people's monthly costs, I'm laughing at them."

An architect with Corbett Sibinel Architects, Burns is currently working on the architectural programming for the Red River College campus downtown. He is also co-designer of the very first double-wall house, which he simply describes as "an inside two-by-four wall and an outside two-by-four wall that is stuffed with fibreglass in between."

Now listed for sale at \$104,300, with Judy Lindsay Team Realty, 267 Albany St. offers living space that fits right in with today's trends. The Toronto loft-style home may be unconventional, but it has a design that is economical and functional in more ways than one.

Right from the front door, distinct differences are apparent in this 1,596-square-foot, two-storey home that overlooks Truro Park and Truro Creek.

The foyer is tight, with room for an ornate desk, a double closet and a stairwell framed by soaring angled walls topped off with ledges. On either side of the staircase are two aisles that head in opposite directions.

To the left is the office. It's an isolated room, providing a private workspace for the home-based business. Burns says the location is a perfect way to have clients over without causing interference to your home life. One entire wall features an alcove with built-in bookcases and shelving. This design allows the flexibility of installing a double closet in the alcove for those who may want to turn this two-bedroom home into a three-bedroom.

Continued
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the open hallway to the right of the stairs takes you to the sleeping wing. This is where you'll find the back entrance with ceramic tile flooring, access to the basement, storage closets for men and supplies, and a full bathroom finished in neutral greys. The set of French doors adds warmth to the overall decor. Two bedrooms are in this wing, with a master bedroom that features his and hers closets and large windows.

There's no furnace to break down," says Burns, "and you don't get that blowing around." An air-to-air exchanger provides fresh air — a little idea when you've got a completely sealed home with R40 walls that are inches thick, R80 in the attic and double-glaze windows.

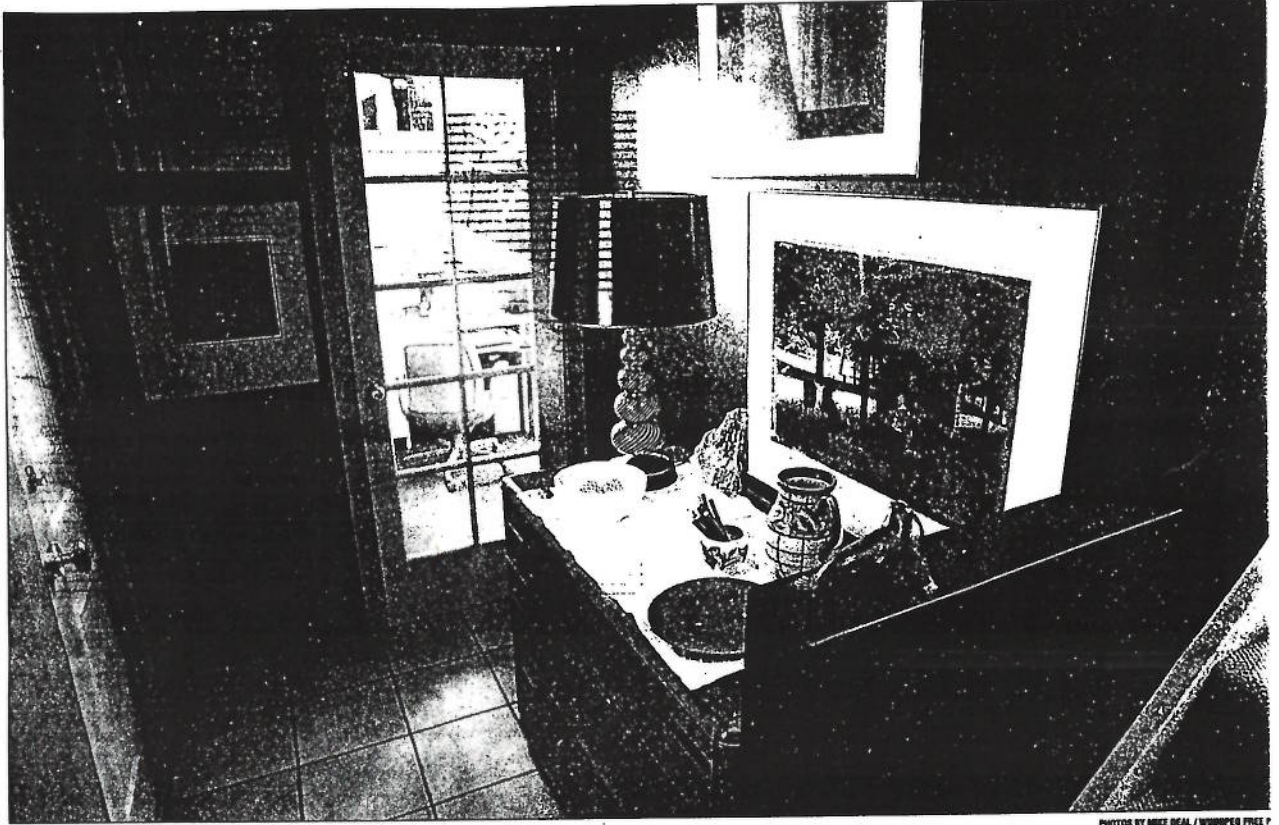
The other thing you have is complete control over the temperature in a room, which is a big advantage," says Burns. He likes a hot bathroom, which is kept at 75 degrees, and a cool bedroom, kept at 65 degrees. When the rooms are not in use, he has the option of turning the heat right down.

There's nothing more luxurious than to get up in the morning and have a bedroom that's nice and hot," says Burns. "Other people may make different choices, but when you've got electric baseboard heat, you can make your own choices."

Up the stairs, the angled walls begin to mix in with open half walls, beams and more ledges. Here is where the best living is done. "There were a lot of reasons why I put the living rooms on the second floor," says Burns. One of the reasons was to get the best view from up there of the park, creek and the back yard. The other reason is, clearly, that it rises. I wanted a warm living area, and this house worked like a charm."

Given that the neighbourhood has mature trees (the house was built on an infill lot), an abundance of natural sunlight is easier to come by when you're up high. So is the feeling of an open space. Burns says the light that gets on the second level is warmer and clearer than main-level light. He's taken full advantage, with picture windows everywhere. One window is strategically placed to send light down the open stairwell, brightening up the yer.

This space also features a ceiling that slopes out from the centre, and track lighting that serves to both illuminate the room and highlight artwork. The walls are painted so the light colours play against dark colours. One side is kept as a formal living room that looks out onto the front



PHOTOS BY MIKE DEAL / WHIMPER PRICE P

street through a five-by-six-foot picture window. The stereo in this room can be heard throughout, as the home is wired for sound.

The great room is at the other end. It has an open kitchen, dining area and seating arrangement that look out over the back yard and creek. The key here is versatility.

"This is a very adaptable room," says Burns. "You're only seeing one of about 20 or 30 formations. At one time, this was set up as a formal dining room."

Burns had planned to build a garage with a rooftop patio, which would be accessible from the great room. Right now, there's just the garden door.

The galley-style kitchen with European cabinetry overlooks the great room from behind an angled half wall. "In 1983, you didn't find any house on the market that had angled walls," says Burns. "You really had to look. It's something that has come only in the last 18 years." He says the angled wall in the kitchen started out as purely functional. The theme was then carried through the home.

On the kitchen side, the wall is finished



Burns' home, clockwise from top: foyer and home office, exterior shows double-wall construction, kitchen.

ished in a retro design with small ceramic squares, and a strip of corkboard to pin up the recipes you're working on.

Laid out to maximize efficiency and space, the kitchen has one section with cupboards for the dishware close to the dishwasher, and a food-preparation station that includes pantry, fridge, down-drafter cooktop, wall oven and open shelves for cookbooks. A small

built-in china cabinet with leaded glass doors is just outside the kitchen, on display for the entire room.

Looking out over the back yard, you can view the bustling activity. From Deer Lodge Community Centre's soccer fields, which host games all summer long, to cross-country enthusiasts skiing down the creek right through to Bruce Park and over to the Assiniboine River in winter. "It takes me 15 minutes to walk from



here to the entrance of the zoo," says Burns, who thinks this house would work well for a single person, a couple or family with children.

For further information, contact Allan Asplin, Judy Lindsay Team Realty at 925-2900.

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