

# A Department For Home Planners

BY JAMES S. FREAR.

AS WE have passed along the way that led to a better knowledge of the elements of a better built home, there has doubtless arisen a questioning thought of the costs. Costs and your home are inseparable. The most important endeavor being to hold them within reasonable limits.

There are many ways of saving costs. Substitutions may be made of minor materials. Rooms may be made to do a greater service. Designs may be simplified. But there is one way NOT to save on home building costs, and that is to make use of cheap or inferior grade materials. Just as we have traversed the full course of home design and materials problems will we go through the possibilities of price reduction.

The particular material of which the exterior is to be built will determine a measure of the cost itself, and may be the point on which you would base the selection of this part of your home building problem. In this one point there is every need for considering well the service which the material will give.

**Comparative Costs.**  
Less than two years ago a comparison of continuing costs was run on two similar homes. One of these, a wooden structure, had cost approximately ten thousand dollars. Nearby was a brick home which had cost approximately ten per cent more than the wooden one. The established standards of depreciation and upkeep costs were charged against both buildings for a ten year period. The fire insurance rates on building and contents which apply to both forms of construction were charged against each one. The brick home was charged for seven per cent interest on the additional one thousand dollars which the construction cost.

The results of this summary are interesting. The carrying charges on the brick home were more than twenty-five hundred dollars less for the ten year period. In other words, the main who had chosen to build of the more permanent material was many dollars ahead of the man who built of the more perishable material, and which required a greater upkeep cost.

Costs, we will then assume are not wholly matters of initial construction costs, but continue throughout the life of the building. The initial difference in construction costs being an insurance against increased maintenance costs in the years to come.

In the city of Chicago, there were erected three model homes during 1924. One was of wood, one of concrete block with a coating of stucco, and one of face brick, each standard types of construction. Careful check was kept on the costs of each of these homes, though all of them varied somewhat in floor areas and other elements of design.

We will consider the wooden home first as that is the most general

## Cost Important Consideration For Your New Residence; Build Well And Upkeep Will Not Be So Great In After Years; Three Materials Are Considered In This Article

about thirteen thousand dollars. On this home the possible savings were nearly three thousand dollars. The basement could have been a little shallower, the lot being graded up to a terrace effect to gain the head room lost. Much of the built in case work could be left out. Galvanized iron could have been used in place of copper in the sheet metal work. Fewer switches and base plugs could have been used on the electrical system. Lower priced plumbing fixtures and hardware and galvanized wire in place of bronze screenings would have cut the costs. The oil burner for the furnace would have cost a considerable chunk off the costs had it been left out, and the omission of insulation pipe covering and exterior stucco would have made the cost of this home approximately that of the wooden one.

**Cost of Brick House.**  
The brick home, of face brick, was the most expensive, costing about fourteen thousand dollars, with possible deductions about equal to those on the concrete block house. The measures of cost reduction are approximately the same with the exception of the exterior brick being changed to common brick and receiving a coating of stucco.

In the brick home we again find that the basement and foundations

approximated ten per cent, with the masonry and carpentry costing about forty-five per cent of the total cost, and the plastering about six per cent. These cost percentages are common and could safely be used in considering the costings of these particular portions of the home which you choose.

Attention has been called to foundation and basement costs in each of these homes for a particular reason. For many years a prominent eastern architect has labored on the theory that no home requires a basement. A room which would perform the functions of a basement would need to be less than ten feet square, and could be built on the first floor.

To support his theory he has built many homes in a long island suburb, testing some new angle of his theory in each one. Not long ago a

to guard against dry rot of the timbers, must have openings through which air currents circulate. Costs savings are individual affairs, and are governed to a considerable extent by local conditions. In one city it may be extremely expensive to build of clay or concrete products, while in another, and I have one city in mind that is in the midst of the lumber producing area, it is more costly to build of wood. This is a matter for local investigation, the comparison of costs bringing to your attention the less expensive material and method.

One other measure of possible saving lies in the planning for the various comfort features of built-in furniture, and seeing that the place is left for them to be installed at some later date. Many of them can be done without for a while, but they will all find their place as the years go on.

Cost reduction, when practiced in the light to true economy, is a commendable feature. But when it is accomplished at the cost of the structure's stability or its interior comforts, it is the least valuable of achievements. Better indeed to build a smaller home and have it well built than the thin spreading of the building budget over a larger and less permanent structure.

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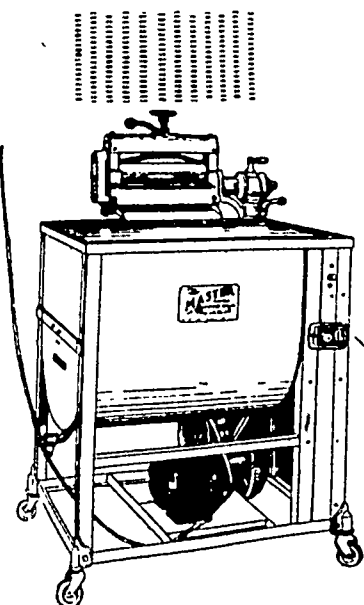
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