

HOMES

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SECTION B



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Is this the future? of home construction?

Canadian invention may revolutionize
the way our houses are put together

By **ROBERT KOOPMANS**
Daily News Staff Reporter

An untrained eye would have a hard time seeing what's different about the house being built at the corner of Linfield Drive and Aberdeen Way. To those in the know, however, the level-entry rancher is the cutting edge of a new wave of high-tech home construction, using new methods and materials that could make traditional dimensional lumber framing a thing of the past.

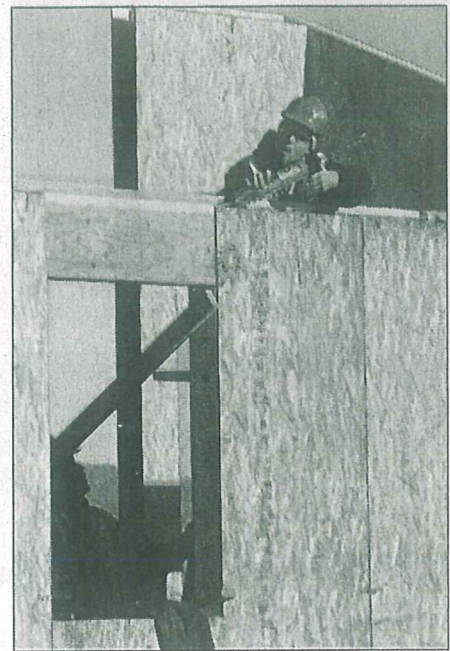
This house, the first of its kind in Kamloops, is being built with SIPs, said Duane Svendsen, who works for Trout Creek International Homes in Kamloops.

"Structural Insulated Panels," a Canadian invention, have been used in construction industry for many years, he said. But the newest generation of SIPs is greatly improved, offering more efficiency in both the building process as well as in the final home.

Each panel consists of sheets of OSB wood structurally laminated to a core of high-density rigid expanded polystyrene foam. The final panel is extremely rigid and strong, said Svendsen. The panels are pre-built at the company's factory in Kamloops.

"The whole house came on this one 48-foot trailer," he said.

◆ See **SAY GOODBYE** /B2



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TRU STUDENT Evan Towle installs the top plate on a section of structural insulated panels on a home in Aberdeen.

Say goodbye to dips, wows in walls, floors

◆ Continued from Page B1

The panels can be made into any combination of shapes, allowing for unique designs that would be difficult or impossible to build with traditional building methods.

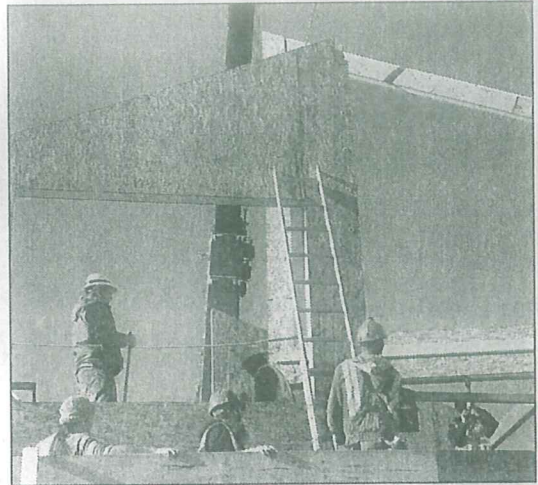
As well, the flatness of each of the panels translates into extremely straight walls and floors, with none of the dips, bends, wows, twists or bulges that people accept in 2x6 stud-frame construction.

The solid panel walls also mean the days of "hunting for the stud" behind a sheet of drywall to hang a picture frame are over in a SIP home, he said. There are no studs, and every location on a wall is as good a place to hang a picture as anywhere else.

The differences in the construction require some new techniques and building experience. At this home, TRU trades students are learning to install the panels and finish the structure. These homes are not built in the traditional sense of the word. The panels are installed and fixed together one at a time with high-tensile wood screws.

Svendson said the speed of on-site construction is remarkable. This house was transformed from bare foundation to erect structure ready for doors, windows, shingles and siding within two days, and that's only because windy conditions on day one made it too dangerous to use the crane.

The other advantage of SIP homes is their en-



PREMIER Building Systems representative Todd Bell, left, watches installation of one of the insulated panels by TRU construction students.

vironmental "greenness," he said. The homes create less waste in the building process and are incredibly energy efficient. The lack of spaces, gaps and openings in the walls, roofs and floors makes the homes silent, solid and airtight.

"These are solid panels, there is no air movement between the panels," Svendson said.

SIP homes are about 10 per cent more expensive to build, but the energy efficiency of the homes reduces homeowner costs down the road. Typical energy savings equate to about 40 per cent per year, he said, numbers that add up with time.

While this home is the first in Kamloops built with the technology, Svendson said more are in the works. Will this one day be the future of home construction? Maybe, Svendson said.

"I would like to say we will take a good part of the market (with this construction) but we won't do it right away," he said. "But with the new EnerGuide requirements coming, this will definitely be an alternative and a solution."

rkoopmans@kamloopsnews.ca