



This unassuming house actually has eco-friendly engineering features that mean it could last for centuries — instead of decades.

SUPPLIED

Exterior walls include cement, insulation and rebar.

# House built of concrete offers many benefits

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Special to The Journal  
WETASKIWIN

Billed as “a home with a difference,” the new show home in Wetaskiwin is certainly drawing people in.

Yet once they take a look at the spacious three-bedroom bungalow, “they’re surprised that it’s so normal,” says Les Wold of Dabro Homes Ltd.

The home is concrete up to the roof — that’s the difference — which probably sets up images of a cold, sterile block in most visitors’ minds.

Instead, they find a warm, inviting home with all the right stuff for today’s family, from the stucco exterior with double attached garage to the island kitchen with corner pantry and oak cabinets, gas fireplace in the living room, in-floor radiant heating and four-piece ensuite off the master bedroom.

The wider windowsills are the only hint as to the different construction. They accommodate the thicker concrete walls and have actually turned into a runaway best feature with the people calling in to see the home.

So why build with concrete in the first place?

For starters, it makes a super-insulated house, Wold says.

“You save about 50 per cent on your heating bills on a monthly basis.”

You also get a more comfortable living environment — cooler in the summer because of the concrete’s mass, and warmer in the winter. A much quieter home as well, because concrete reduces sound transmission by 60 per cent, fading out barking dogs, traffic, thunderstorms and other noise.

Plus the house is generally healthier, due to its heat recovery system, which brings in fresh air and sends out stale air — a boon for the allergy-sufferer — and does so with 90-per-cent efficiency. The house is eco-friendly as well, calling on concrete and easing up on trees for the interior construction and using less resources to heat it.

But you wouldn’t know all this from the looks of the house — “aside from looking at your utility bills every month,” Wold says. That and the wider windowsills of course, which people like be-

Cost-effective material saves homeowners up to 50 per cent on heating bills



Super-solid construction of Dabro’s Wetaskiwin showhome includes poured concrete and rebar.



Thicker walls cut into available floor space, but only slightly.



Island kitchen features oak cabinets.



Master bedroom, looking toward the ensuite entrance.



Ensuite bathroom

cause they can put plants, pictures and other decorative items on them.

The house is super-solid, with rebar running horizontally and vertically through the walls. Indeed, these engineered walls can resist tornado-force winds and the house will last for centuries as opposed to decades.

“It’s an alternative way of building that just makes sense,” he says of the concrete construction.

The only disadvantages are the thicker walls, which encroach a few inches into the floor space. That doesn’t put much of a crimp in the overall space — there’s still 1,397 square feet left in living space here.

“The other reality is that they cost five per cent more to build,” says Wold, adding homeowners get the money back in terms of lower heating bills and a comfortable home that holds its resale value.

The price tag is \$197,000 for the house only, which is located at 108 Northbend Dr.

This is about the fifth concrete house Dabro Homes has built. (Others are located in Leduc, Calmar and just outside Sherwood Park.) The custom builder has been doing basements like this for over 10 years, using insulated concrete form technology from Plasti-Fab Ltd.

A few years ago Dabro started building with concrete up to the roof and

found the resulting homes always sold. “There’s actually quite a demand for them,” Wold says.

The key is educating the consumer on what is involved in concrete construction and the advantages of this building style.

Building such a home does not take any longer than traditional methods. Nor is it any more difficult to build — “you just have to know what you’re doing because you pour the concrete, it’s there,” Wold says, underlining the need for proper bracing.

Dabro builds in Edmonton and surrounding communities and will be focusing more on concrete homes because of the advantages they offer, Wold says.

## Build For The Health of It!!

### Dabro Homes

#### Building homes with a difference

At first glance, it looks like any other nice new home. But what’s between the walls separates this Dabro-built home from the rest. By a country mile.

What you can’t see is a wall made of solid concrete.

Dabro Homes uses insulating concrete forms (ICFs) to create a home with numerous advantages over standard wood-frame construction. ICFs are interlocking, expanded polystyrene blocks that serve as a form for concrete. Once the concrete sets, these forms remain in place to provide insulation. They incorporate plastic strips that serve as a fastening surface for drywall or siding.



What does the home-owner get out of this? Exceptional energy efficiency, outstanding soundproofing — and more. “We’re focusing on the health aspect of these homes,” says Les Wold of Dabro.

“We build a product that is not only healthier for the families living in them, but also healthy for their finances and for the environment.”

A Heat Recovery Ventilator is used in these homes to provide fresh, filtered air, exhausting stale and unhealthy air to the outside — a bonus for families with dust or pollen allergies. The ICF blocks themselves are made using a steam process and do not emit off-gases.

Comfort levels are enhanced, contributing to a healthy indoor environment. “Our walls give a 60 per cent sound



reduction over ‘normal’ walls,” says Wold. “Clients have to look outside to check the weather because they can’t hear it inside.”

Thermal mass also contributes to overall comfort because the concrete absorbs solar heat and slowly releases it. With an even distribution of heat, the homes have no cold spots. This makes it cooler in the summer, warmer in the winter.

Savings in utility costs come from the 40-50 per cent reduction in average energy consumption. “To obtain the same insulation value as an ICF wall, a wood-framed wall would have to be insulated to R50.”

“Our homes reduce environmental impact in many ways,” says Wold. “They use fewer natural resources to heat them and fewer trees to build them. Contributing to a healthy future.”

### Dabro Homes Ltd.

Building Super-Insulated Concrete Homes

A Home with a Difference

See the latest Dabro Homes super insulated concrete home at 108 Northbend Drive in Wetaskiwin. For a map or further information, log on to [www.dabro.com](http://www.dabro.com) or call (780) 485-0303.



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