



Energy Efficient Homes

The Retrofit Toolkit

Sheet no 7: Insulation: Walls

Types of wall

- Solid and cavity
- Timber, stone, brick
- Historic and modern

Respect the nature of the building!

To avoid problems the Whole House Retrofit plan must be tailored to the characteristics of the building. Since the 1920's cavity walls have become common in the UK, and are now standard. Before that time most walls were a single skin of brick or stone with no insulation. Shropshire has a large number of older single-skin houses from the Industrial Revolution, and even older half-timbered houses built with a timber frame filled in with wooden panels or wattle and daub.

These various types of wall construction require different approaches to insulation.

- Some older buildings and badly constructed newer ones present considerable challenges.
- Solid walls need to breathe, and should be insulated with vapour-open materials
- Historic buildings require special treatment.

- Advice is essential in all cases, and planning consent may also be required.

See pages 47 and 52 of the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit document at:

www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/2ddb125k/net-zero-carbon-toolkit.pdf

For historic buildings see:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/energy-efficiency-and-historic-buildings/insulating-walls-in-historic-buildings/>

The Centre for Alternative Technology's page on natural building materials may also be useful:

<https://cat.org.uk/info-resources/free-information-service/building/natural-building-materials>

Types of insulation - Choosing the best alternative

Cavity

The function of cavity walls is to create a space of air to prevent damp from penetrating into the



interior. All new homes now have in-built insulation in the cavity. It is now standard practice to retrofit older cavity walls with insulation, but damp problems can emerge if the wall is unsuitable or the right materials are not used. See:

www.cse.org.uk/advice/cavity-wall-insulation

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/cavity-wall-insulation>

External

Insulation can be applied externally to solid stone or brick walls. This will alter the appearance of the house, and may require alterations to the roof and eaves, the gutters and downpipes and the windows. Planning permission may also be required.

For further information see:

www.cse.org.uk/advice/solid-wall-insulation-external

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/solid-wall-insulation>

Internal

Internal wall insulation is a useful alternative. It will make the rooms slightly smaller and will require the re-siting of electric sockets and skirting boards.

The following websites offer further information:

www.cse.org.uk/advice/solid-wall-insulation-internal

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/solid-wall-insulation>

<https://cat.org.uk/info-resources/free-information-service/eco-renovation/internal-wall-insulation>

Other sheets available in this series

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3. The Energy Hierarchy: The Principle behind the Whole Building Plan
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