

People Exploring Low Energy Homes

Laburnum Close, CB4 1BB

Anne and Bruno

Anne and Bruno were inspired by an Open Eco Homes visit two years ago to think about installing external solid wall insulation. Then Cambridge City Council made solid wall insulation grants available to city residents and the chance to install became a reality.

Anne says:

‘Both my husband and I wanted to insulate our 1930’s home, in which we had lived since 1991. Initially, in September 2014, we went on an Open Eco Homes tour to see for ourselves the standard of work done and how it looked next to a semidetached home without external wall insulation. Most importantly we wanted to find out if it really reduced heating bills. At this point, my husband was reassured.’



Support from Cambridge City Council

‘We took up an offer from Cambridge City Council’s Green Deal scheme (no longer available) and paid a deposit in November 2014. Having the City Council’s support, we felt reassured in case anything went wrong. For example, the first nominated insulation company entered into administration, and our deposit was lost. Cambridge City Council immediately put into motion other companies for us to choose from.’

Neighbourly co-operation

‘At the same time I passed this information to our neighbour, who also became interested. He, in turn, told his neighbour about the Green Deal Offer, and she also agreed to take up the offer. We all chose to have ‘Slip Brick’ put onto the front of our houses to keep the design in keeping with the other houses in the Close. Total covering with Slip Brick would have been too expensive so at the back of the properties we had standard rendering. All of us agreed to have the same colour of Slip Brick (a pseudo brick).’

Overview

Property age: c.1930s

Type: Semi-detached

Wall type: Solid and Cavity Wall

Floor area: 124 m²

Project timescale: Solid Wall Insulation, April 2016

Cost of retrofit: £6,000. £900 for customer, £5,100 from Cambridge City Council grant

Occupants: 2 adults

	Energy kWh/m ² /yr		Carbon kgCO ₂ /yr	
	Elec	Gas	/m ²	/person
Before	32kWh		71kWh	
After	N/A		N/A	

Key features

Insulation and Glazing

- External solid wall insulation
- Double-glazing (installed 1991)

Heating/energy

- Solar PV

Water

- Seven water butts



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Finances

'We wanted to save money and cut our carbon footprint so financial considerations were very important. We considered it an investment and calculated the payback period for both PV and external wall insulation. The City Council Green Deal payment was essential for the wall insulation.'

Lifestyle changes

'We have a hybrid car and cycle regularly. We have generally lowered the heating temperature and switched to warmer clothing. We also have an allotment for growing food.'

Performance

'Following this work, we paid to have an Energy Performance Certificate, and were reassured that our house's energy efficiency had improved from D to C. We are waiting to see how good the insulation will be this coming winter. The solar PV panels work as anticipated.'

Suppliers and installation

'The suppliers were found via Cambridge City Council. Thrift Energy efficiently installed the insulation over a period of 3 weeks in April 2016. Throughout the installation the site manager visited and took photos of the work. Both he and his team of Polish men were very good; they were reliable and if we had any questions, were quick to reply.'

'The separate company, responsible for the scaffolding were fiercely efficient. In that they caused minor damage to a windowsill, which was immediately repaired by the insulation company.'

Contacts

External wall insulation: [Thrift Energy](#)



Products and Costs

External wall insulation: £6,000. £900 for customer, £5,100 from Cambridge City Council grant.

What sources of information would you recommend?

We found visiting existing homes with external wall insulation the best source of information.

