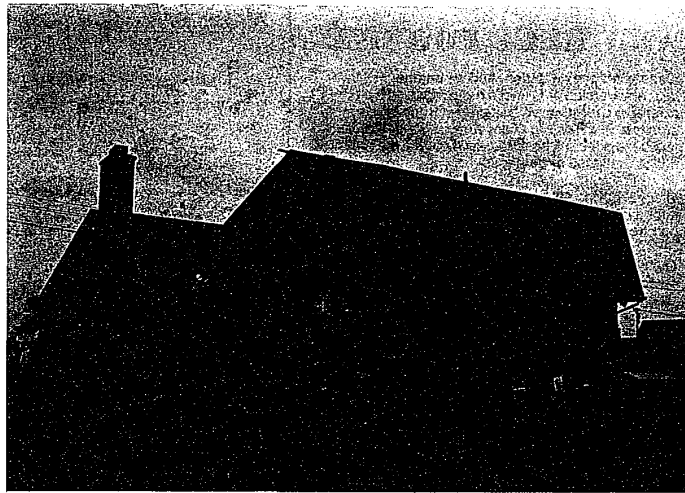
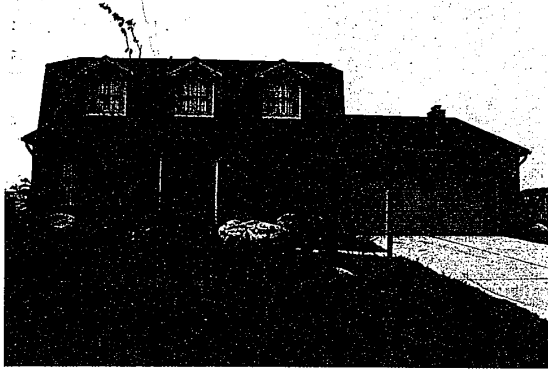


# The sun . . .



From the outside, this solar-heated home doesn't look any different than other homes in the neighborhood. (Photos by Pat Bordman).

Only from the rear of the house can the solar collectors be seen on the rear roofline.

## . . . Is it the shining star in search for energy?

By PAT BORDMAN

Is there a star in your future? It could be that the immense, gaseous mass known as our sun holds the key to comfortable living. Touted now as a possible savior of our energy needs, solar power may be energy's shining star.

But if you think solar power is a thing of the future in the Detroit area, you're only partly right. There is currently a house outfitted for solar use in Northville. Detroit Edison, together with Fred Greenspan Development Contractors, and the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, built a prototype solar home to see how solar energy might be used in a home in our geographical area.

In surprising contrast to the futuristic image that solar power evokes, one finds a traditionally designed two-story Dutch Colonial blending into the community so well, that without identifying signs, the visitor wouldn't guess it's true purpose. In fact, the only outside feature that betrays this home's energy source is the rear roofline solar collectors.

"We wanted to test a home that was typical, something that would be a part of the community, and then have a real family live there to further test our findings," said Jared Goetz of Detroit Edison.

ENTERING, the visitor is surprised by the traditional charm exhibited in this 2,300-square-foot home and pleased at the comfort. Solar water and space heating has made little noticeable difference other than the necessary equipment in the basement.

There are no loud noises, musty smells or dry air. This is truly a liveable dwelling with four bedrooms, two and one-half baths, living room, dining room, kitchen with eating space, first-floor utility room, and family room with fireplace and double French doors leading to an outdoor wooden deck.

Featuring the best in conservation features, the house boasts insulated basement walls, foil-backed drywall at exterior walls and ceilings to act as a moisture barrier and three foot over-

hang on the south facing windows to let in the winter sunshine but deflect the hot summer sun. Lighting was chosen for energy efficiency and usefulness, with many fluorescent fixtures selected for longevity and reduced operating costs. The fireplace fresh air intake with damper control and sealed glass doors at the fireplace opening, prevents the use of already warmed household air.

In addition, the builder has added many deluxe features for convenient living such as a Nu-Tone food center, instant-hot water dispenser at the kitchen sink, trash compactor, stove with microwave oven, Intercom, electronic air cleaner, and sprinkling system.

HOW DOES this stellar example of future comfort work?

Solar collector panels are on the south facing roofline for maximum exposure to sunlight. They look somewhat like large, dark windows and are fronted by low-iron tempered glass, which allows more sunlight to enter to the underlying water-filled copper pipes.

On sunny days, the collectors soak up heat, which is then transferred to the water circulating through the pipes in the collectors. This solar-heated water is pumped to a large (500 gallon) insulated storage tank in the basement where it is kept until needed.

After the sun-heated water enters the storage tank, it can either be stored until needed later in the day, used to warm the interior of the house, or used to heat water for bathing, cooking, and laundry.

To warm the house, the solar-heated water is pumped to a solar-heat exchanger where the heat is transferred to air. The heated air is then circulated through the house by a fan and ductwork.

Water heating works on much the same principle. City water enters a solar water pre-heater which is warmed by solar-heated water pumped from the storage tank. (The two waters do not intermingle, so there's no chance of contamination.) This pre-heated water is pumped to an electric water tank for

use in the home. If the water isn't hot enough, the electric water tank can boost the temperature with electric elements.

IN THE NORTH, the whole system is intended as a supplement to existing methods of home comfort.

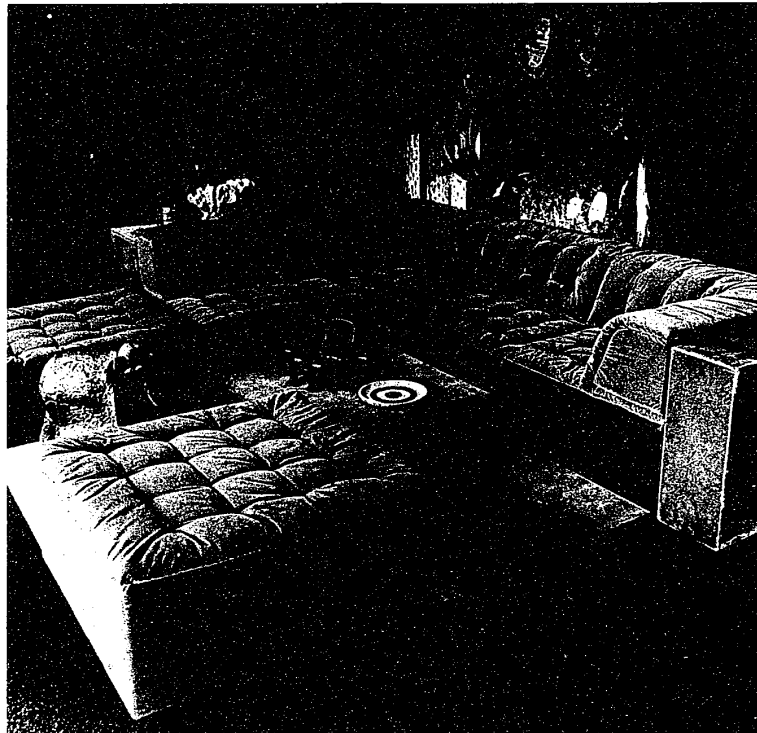
"We don't yet have any method of

storing the sun's energy for long periods. The sun is only out a certain portion of the day and so, although the sun is a renewable resource, it is not a con-

trollable one. We will always need a backup system," cautioned George

(Continued on page 6B)

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Upstairs in the solar home is a full bath with a fluorescent fixture powered by the sun.