

Do you need to build a light shaft for your skylight?

Home repair questions answered by Popular Mechanics Magazine. Q. I will be installing a

skylight in my living room and I'm a little confused about whether I need a light shaft, and how to go about construct-

ing one. Can you shed some light on this? A. When you are dealing with a ceiling other than a cathedral, you

will have a space between the skylight unit and the ceiling below. The size and shape of this light well or shaft depends on various factors — the construction of the roof and ceiling, the desired amount of light to enter the room, and the appearance of the entire area.

If you want a light shaft, simply frame out the area between the roof rafters and the ceiling joists with appropriate lumber. Keep in mind that this shaft can be designed to extend straight down into the room or be aligned perpendicular to the roof opening so it comes into the room at an angle.

Box in the shaft with plywood, drywall or paneling. Finishing off with white paint will better help reflect exterior light into the room.

Q. My brick house is about 20 years old. It has a concrete porch about 5 feet square with steps going down to the backyard. The steps and the porch have settled and pulled away from the house leaving about an 8-inch gap at the top. Even if I could find a house jack big enough, I couldn't fill in under the porch foundation. There's no opening under the porch slab and steps to build a form.

A. If you are certain the porch is not still settling (if the gap is not getting wider year by year), you can fill in the gap between the steps and the house foundation wall starting at the bottom where the gap is narrowest. Wedge a 2-by-8 board vertically against each end of the steps to hold the repair concrete in place until it sets. Carefully fill the space between the house and the porch with concrete and compact it by poking or ridding it with a hoe handle to make certain it has completely filled the gap.

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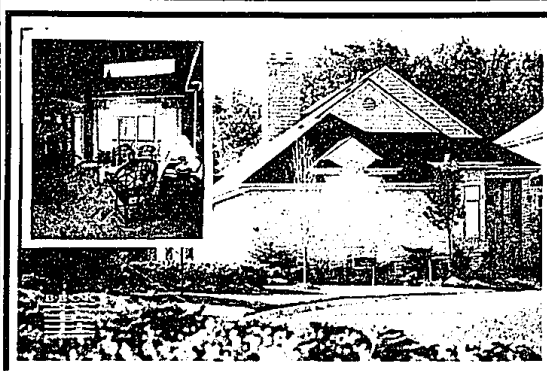
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