

'Many new houses are badly equipped'

A LARGE percentage of homes built in the past 10 years are badly equipped, claimed a Buckinghamshire letting agent this week.

The level of mod-cons in British homes is below European standards says Philip Suter, area manager in charge of Frank Farr's residential letting and management department.

He has been astonished to find starter homes with only a two-bar electric fire for heating. He also criticises builders who save £50 by putting taps on the bath instead of a shower spray.

He said: "It seems amazing that we are now in 1992 and the standards contained in British homes are not as high as in the majority of mainland Europe.

"Over the last ten years there have been thousands of new properties built and a large percentage are very badly equipped.

"Many properties, although having double glazing, do not have central heating.

"Some starter homes have only a two-bar electric fire.

"As far as the bathroom is concerned, many builders save approximately £50 by installing a couple of taps on the bath instead of a shower mixer unit.

By PAT BRAMLEY

"Even if someone doesn't want to stand up to take a shower – and usually the pressure and size of the spray unit is poor – they will want a spray unit to wash their hair."

The agent urges anyone likely to rent or buy a new home to insist the builder upgrades "these everyday comforts that are normal in the rest of Western Europe."

"We have applicants viewing properties

from a lot of European countries and the USA and even the British who want to rent want such normal comforts as a shower mixer tap, shaver point and central heating."

His own firm, says Philip Suter, has a brochure for landlords with a section devoted to advice about decoration and what tenants expect to find in a rented house.

"Our staff are often asked when they take prospective tenants to view a house: 'Where are the shower mixer taps?' It's like selling a car without a heated rear window."

Nonsense, says president

THE charge that homes built within the past ten years are badly equipped was called "a lot of nonsense" by Geoffrey Wheatcroft, president of the Southern Housebuilders Association.

At the Marlow office of Costain Homes, where he is sales and marketing director, the housebuilders' champion said: "For a start, few new homes are built to rent. Most new homes are built for sale.

"In the current market, buyers are making the decision wholly on price. Where some builders have put in more of the cosmetic items such

as a shower mixer unit on the bathroom taps, it hasn't worked. These are frills which can be put in later.

"The standards of new home building across the board are better than they have ever been. Starter homes are built to exacting building regulations and high standards of insulation but the internal specification has to be geared to affordability.

"When you move on to middle-priced homes, the ritzy specification – superb sanitary ware, superb fittings, even heat exchangers in the roof for super efficient central heating – can hold its own anywhere in the world.

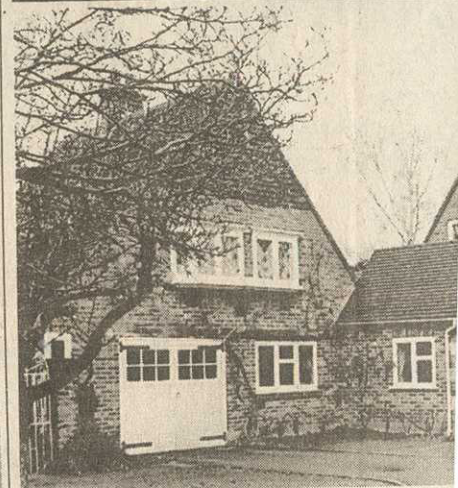


Phillip Suter



Geoffrey Wheatcroft

Win a £½m ho



Hurry to win this luxury house and

THIS is the £500,000 house you could win for a fiver.

It is the top prize in a competition organised by the National Hospital Trust to buy scanners for National Health Hospitals. Gillian Mortimer, organiser of the High Wycombe Scannappeal, has been told our local appeal is on the organisers' list for a handout.

The star prize in the competition was the childhood home of actress Jenny Hanley and her MP brother Jeremy Hanley. Their parents actor Jimmy Hanley and Dinah Sheridan (star of the recent TV series Don't Wait Up) bought the five-bedroom Denham house in 1936 for 5,000 guineas.

They lived there until the Fifties. It has changed hands at least twice since.

The current owner was about to put the house on the market last year when he had a chance meeting at a dinner party with a friend of one of the fund-raiser for the nationwide charity... and that's how it came to be the most valuable prize ever offered to raise funds for life-savin

Five year-old home is a dream for any gardener