

Saving space and saving the environment too

Despite their ubiquity, radiators are not the ideal solution to heating a house. They are cumbersome, they heat a room in patches, and they are not generally the most efficient forms of heat transfer - yet they are used the length and breadth of the land.

There is also the option of underfloor heating, which has its advantages over radiators. But underfloor heating will not be for everyone, particularly those who have to retrofit into a house which previously had no such system.

However, Dryzone Ltd could have the answer for people looking to maximise their space as they save on energy. Dryzone Ltd is the distributor of the THERMODUL skirting board heating system, which can replace radiators while not requiring the sorts of modifications necessary to put an underfloor system in place. Indeed, so successful has THERMODUL been to date that it won the Best Interior Building product at PLAN EXPO 2006.

Already in Ireland about 50 projects have been completed by Dryzone Ltd, both newly built and retrofitted.

The key factor for many people at first is the space saving element, in that THERMODUL takes up no more space than a standard skirting board; but users quickly come to realise the benefits of energy savings - in some cases, as high as about 30%.

"With the downturn in the housing market, instead of moving, many people are choosing to put their money back into their homes," said Andrea Splendori, director of Dryzone Ltd.

"People these days know far more about sustainability and energy savings, and they see that they can install a THERMODUL system, insulate their house and put in, maybe, a heat pump, for less than the cost of stamp duty."

Radiant heat is the reason for much of THERMODUL's energy efficiency. Firstly, radiant heat, as opposed to convection heat, is absorbed more easily by the body.

Secondly, the radiant heat from the THERMODUL system heats each room uniformly, from top to bottom, whereas radiators create cold spots and hot spots. And because the system uses only about one pint of water per room, it heats quickly, meaning that a boiler doesn't have to work as hard.

"If the system is used correctly, with the right controls and insulation, you could experience energy savings of about 30%," explained Splendori. "If your body is used to 22 degrees indoors, then because of the radiant system



SO SIMPLE: Views of the system installed in a kids' room (above) and along a stairs (below)



employed by THERMODUL, you can drop that temperature to 19 or 20 degrees and remain as comfortable. And, every degree lower saves about 10% on energy."

Dryzone Ltd's products can be fitted with practically any heating system, although for maximum energy efficiency, it is advisable to elect for wood pellet or heat pump systems (Dryzone Ltd has fitted an exhaust air heat pump with a THERMODUL system, and he says that geothermal heat pumps could be used, depending on output conditions).

Oil and gas boilers can also be used with Dryzone Ltd's system, but for maximum efficiency, a condensing boiler should be employed.

"THERMODUL is ideal for condens-

ing boilers," said Splendori. "And because it runs at lower temperatures, the condenser reuses about 99% of its energy."

In terms of installation, depending on insulation, it is usually possible to have only one, or usually at most two, walls fitted with the skirting board system. The rest of the walls can be fitted with blank skirting board or matching timber skirting.

With a new build, the system can even be fitted to appear as a blank wall, without the need for a skirting board - although some people will still like the effect of skirting.

But, whichever system they use, they will be getting the combined benefits of extra space, cleaner air, drier walls and reduced energy bills.