

Putting the shine back into housing

Copper accents are back in vogue

It's very expensive but it lasts forever

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

What glitters isn't gold, it's copper: copper eavestroughs, copper downspouts, copper flashings — even copper roofing.

Copper accents have long been used in home building and for commercial properties (think about the roof on the Old City Hall).

But within the past few years, its popularity appears to be enjoying a resurgence — especially for new homes.

"What's happened in the last 10 years or so is that people are better off than they ever have been before," says John Emery, president of Fairmont Properties Ltd., a 28-year-old Aurora-based company specializing in custom home building and high-end renovations.

"They started buying nicer houses constructed with more expensive materials. At around the same time, the sophistication of people's tastes began changing rather dramatically, too," he adds.

"They began asking for materials with cosmetic appeal and longevity."

Enter copper: the metal with beauty and brawn.

Fairmont now uses copper accents on all of the two or three

custom homes it builds each year.

Over time, copper changes colour, which gives it an elegant aged appearance. Add copper downspouts and collector boxes fabricated in rectangular shapes (instead of the modern, rounded style), and you've created an air of history and importance.

Copper also lasts longer than more common materials such as galvanized steel, and has greater strength than aluminum, according to Emery, whose company works primarily in Rosedale and Forest Hill.

But of course, a building material that has it all comes at a price.

A five-inch eavestrough with a standard downspout made of vinyl costs \$7 per linear foot. That same part in copper costs \$19.79 per linear foot — about 183 per cent more than vinyl.

"They all work equally as well," Emery points out. "But aluminum, galvanized metal and vinyl have a life expectancy of about 20 years. Copper is not immortal, but it will last a very long time."

Does copper go well with any type of home? Emery says yes, although copper featured on a Georgian-style home topped with cedar shingles is one of the most classic looks.

SOURCES

► Fairmont Properties Ltd., Aurora, 905-841-6161, toll-free at 1-866-841-6161, info@fairmontproperties.ca, www.fairmontproperties.ca



COURTESY FAIRMONT HOMES

Copper looks good on almost any home, but copper trim on a Georgian-style home topped with cedar shingles, like this home in Toronto, is the most classic look.