

There's No Substitute For Good Sized Rooms

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A house plan should be judged on two fundamentals, room sizes and room arrangements. All other details are of secondary importance. Picture windows, window walls, sliding glass doors, fireplaces and built-in can openers will not compensate for skimpy rooms grouped with no regard for convenience.

Building costs tend to have a restrictive influence on room sizes. After the market became glutted with two-bedroom houses and growing families were checked by limited budgets, many home buyers made the mistake of compromising on smaller rooms in order to have a greater number of rooms. This has resulted in constant annoyances with cluttered homes and serious impairment of investments in such homes.

Appraisers have recognized this problem and have worked out some minimum requirements for the guidance of mortgage investors. But like most minimums, these have tended to become maximums under competition. It seems that the best policy for the man who wants a livable house of sound value is to allow as much of a margin as possible above minimum requirements.

The Living Room

How big should a living room be? The minimum size can be figured out on the basis of usable space needed around each piece of furniture.

Sit in an easy chair placed against one wall and put a book on the floor in front of your feet. Stretch out your legs to a comfortable posture for relaxing, pushing the book ahead of your feet. Now measure the distance from the back of the chair to the book. This will show you how much space is needed for comfort in front of each easy chair.

You will probably find that this distance is at least 4½ feet from the wall. Allow the same distance from the opposite wall and you have 9 feet. If your legs are stretched out beside a coffee table, the table will add at least 4 more inches. In order for a person to walk between them, men sprawled out in this fashion, a passage way of at least 2 feet, 8 inches should be allowed.

There you have a total of 12 feet as a minimum between walls—and you probably don't want your furniture against the wall, so the minimum width becomes greater. Now figure the number of persons who will use your living room at one time—members of the family, relatives, friends. Parties can be exceptions, since so many guests sit on the floor anyway. This will give you an estimate for the length of this 12-foot, 4-inch minimum width room.

Remember that a three-seat sofa is crowded when occupied by more than two persons. A television set needs not only wall space, but comfortable grouping of furniture toward it. Ditto for a fireplace. A piano calls for even more space. Windows, radiators and registers limit furniture placement. Tables and table lamps, reading lamps will be needed.

So 20 feet often seems modest in the length of a living room. Sizes for Bedrooms

Wall space is especially important in bedrooms. Heads of beds, dressers, dressing tables, bureaus or other chests of drawers need wall space, cannot block windows

or closet doors. A bedside table for lamp and clock has become almost a must in every bedroom. Twin beds need about 12 feet, 3 inches of wall space to allow for walking space around the beds and a table between them.

A double bed needs 8 feet, 8 inches of unbroken wall space. Sides of beds should be at least 2 to 3 feet from walls or other furniture. Stuffed toys in the dark are the penalty for violating this rule.

The creation of extra wall space in bedrooms by using shoulder-high strip windows has not worked out as anticipated. People sleeping under such windows found it impossible to open them above their heads because of the cold and insurance companies frowned on mortgages when no easy escape from fire was available with high windows.

Sliding closet doors have tended to increase usable floor space in bedrooms, but they call for more wall space than a swinging door. Each bedroom with a closet needs two doors, one for the closet and one for entrance. Each bedroom with cross ventilation needs a window on each of two walls.

Houses with three bedrooms need more than one bathroom. "The additional cost of a powder room is far less than the loss of marketability of a house without it," says the Review of the Society of Residential Appraisers. Two full bathrooms are preferable for a house of three or four bedrooms and a four-bedroom house usually needs a minimum of 2½ baths. A divided, split or compartmented bathroom often solves the problem of duplicating this expensive room to build and equip. Two lavatories often ease the morning rush to prepare for work or school.

A Family Dining Room
A honeymoon cottage or two-bedroom retirement house can get along with a minimum dining area of 80 square feet—8 by 10, for instance. But the minimum dining space that is specified today for a three-bedroom house is 110 square feet. This means that a dining room 10 by 11 feet is regarded as the smallest tolerable for a family house.

Even in this space you may find it crowded with a buffet or sideboard against the wall and six persons seated around the dining table. Experts say that dining room furniture calls for a minimum of 8 feet in width in a dining alcove, or 10 feet for a room in which some space is allowed for circulation. More space is needed for entertaining.

The Modern Kitchen
Additional eating accommodations for six persons are recommended for the modern kitchen of a three or four-bedroom house. The breakfast nook or snack bar may become the most used dining area in the house.

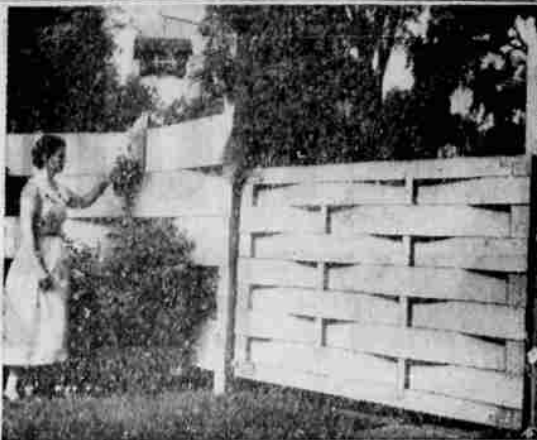
Family living habits have sound the knell for the kitchenette. For years there was a trend away from the big and comfortable kitchen of Grandma's house (when there was room even for a rocking chair). Perhaps modern equipment—the dishwasher, the electric sink, refrigerator and food freezer, built-in wall oven—had something to do with reversing that trend. Nonetheless, today people insist on kitchens big enough to fit a cat.

Usable cabinet space should be counted only when it is within 6 feet from the floor. Space you can't reach is out of bounds. Cabinets above a range or refrigerator are extra and not counted in minimum reachable storage space.

For a three-bedroom house, 24 linear feet of kitchen cabinet space is considered a minimum. Counter space of 6 to 8 linear feet is a minimum for a house of any size.

Most people prefer the kitchen sink to be placed under a window to allow a view of outdoor play areas for children and to admit a maximum of daylight for kitchen chores.

An outside door from the kitchen to the service yard is important for convenience. A lavatory near this door and adjacent to the kitchen is provided in the best plans. A cellar entrance should be provided



BASKET WEAVE fence provides an attractive screen for backyard privacy. You can make a fence like this by bending ready cut strips of tempered hardwood between 4 by 4 posts set at 4-foot intervals. This pressed wood material comes in panels of 4 by 8 feet, which can be ripped to any width desired. The swinging gate at the right was made with strips 6 inches wide. Flower pots attached to hooks add a garden touch.

Let Fence Style Fit Your Home

Fences, like everything else connected with the modern home, are changing styles.

Picket fences and split rail fences continue to hold their popularity, but the Western Pine Association, which comprises more than 100 sawmills and lumber producers, reports a growing trend toward board fences of various individual designs.

Woven fences, angled board screens and paneled fences are winning wide favor.

The reasons for a fence are many. It may be designed to keep out intruders, to keep children or pets in, or for backyard privacy. It can be used to add balance to the architecture of the house, such as making a tall, narrow house seem wider. It may serve as a background for flowers or vines, or as a separation between the service area and the yard, the vegetable garden and the flower garden, or the children's play area and the rest of the grounds.

A fence also can screen your yard from objectionable views or off this service vestibule, or in homes without basements, this is the place for the laundry.

Provision for exhaust fans has become standard in new kitchens because of a trend toward open planning, where kitchens are open to living areas and the housewife can enjoy the party or TV.

Marbelized rubber tile can be used for an impervious top on a cocktail table. Either the tile sizes or sheet form can make a damage-proof top for a child's chest. Doors that get rough treatment can be armored with rubber tile. A sharp flooring knife and a good adhesive are all you need.

BLEEDING occurs when dye from a wallpaper design or stain from coated wood permeates the covering coat of paint, discoloring the finish.

Rubber Tile Fits Decorating Schemes
Resilient rubber tile, the same material used for luxury floor coverings in kitchens and bathrooms, has many other useful household applications. Because of its flexibility and ease of cutting this material lends itself to various decorative ideas. Inlays are easy to devise.

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ASK YOUR LUMBER DEALER
Let your lumber dealer in on your plans for a home workshop project before buying your lumber, advises the Western Pine Association. He will recommend the correct grade and can show you how and where to save money.

See These "Twins" On Display At The Home Show Feb. 24th - 25th

'56-The Year to Fix' Will Make Paying for Modernization Easier

Now is the time to modernize your home. The trend everywhere is toward bigger and better homes. Industries connected with building and maintenance are organizing to make it easier for you to bring your home up to date in comfort, convenience and value. Their slogan for the year is "'56-The Year to Fix."

President Eisenhower has taken a stand favoring steps made in this direction. Commending efforts to check obsolescence in houses throughout the nation, the President said recently in a speech: "... to do something about this to stop this kind of economic deterioration, is very wonderful."

Forty industries and 27 trade associations have joined in a campaign called Operation Home Improvement. This movement, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, has an objective "to unite all building industry factors under one banner to encourage more people to improve their homes, and to make it easier for people to buy materials and services."

Big Need for Repairs
It is estimated that half of the homes in this country are badly in need of repair and improvement. One industry leader sums it up this way:

"The need for modernizing our huge supply of 20 million older homes and expanding the millions of newer ones is bringing into being a vast new home improvement industry rivaling new home construction in dollar volume and economic importance."

Home service centers are now being set up in many lumber yards and building supply stores. Dealers are being instructed how to help you work out the four main steps involved in modernization: (1) developing plans or designs, (2) selecting the right materials, (3) arranging for time payments, and (4) locating competent workmen.

Improvement Is By-Word
"We will continue to handle our contractor business," says one lumber leader, "our home building activities, our do-it-yourself customers, our commercial and industrial trade. But the point is that home improvement is about to become a national by-word."

Arrangements are being made with banks and savings associations to give homeowners everywhere as long as three years to pay for improvements. A job cost-

ing \$500 can be paid for at \$15.97 per month under this plan. In some cases the modernization bill will be merely added to an outstanding mortgage.

Projects to be covered by time payment plans will include adding bedrooms, modernizing kitchens and bathrooms, finishing attics and basements, re-roofing and re-

siding, painting and decorating, replacing or refinishing floors, insulating, replacing gutters and downspouts, installing new heating or air conditioning plants, modernizing electrical wiring and plumbing systems, installing combination screen and storm doors and windows, and adding or enclosing porches.

Water Softeners Mean Clean Clothes

Water softeners have become a standard plumbing fixture in many homes. Hard water not only is extravagant in the use of soap, but congeals dirt into fabrics.

Minerals in hard water combine with soap to form a curd which remains through rinsing and drying. Ironing sets and hardens the curd. Bleaching to remove it weakens textile fibers.

The plumbing and Heating Industries Bureau says soap savings alone pay for as much as 60 percent of the cost of water softening equipment.

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