



101 Tips to Save Time And \$ On Your Construction Project



Concepts and Space

1. The exterior entry to your home is the first impression guests have. It should be clean with live plants and flowers! These exterior details need to be in scale with the entrance.

2. Keep the permanent part of the home in one style.

3. Space planning and scale are key elements in design. Think of the BIG picture. The interior of a custom home should have hallways, doorways, room sizes, etc that are generous in scale.

4. Decide on the size of your home you want to heat, cool and maintain. Living spaces need to be roomy for multiple people, but bedrooms and baths can be cozy if you want to eliminate unnecessary space.



5. Determine your preference for a defined entry or an open view of the area both upon entering the home and in other areas.

6. If you entertain often, consider the areas adjacent to each other for expansion of the guests. Plan your traffic flow.

7. However, certain areas are determined by function. For instance, an office needs filing, book and equipment storage. Consider beverage availability, seating for others in relationship to the desk or a separate gathering area. Most people prefer working facing an open area, not the wall.

8. The dining room size is determined by the number of chairs to be included around a single table or at multiple tables.

9. The size of your media area is dependent on the size of the screen and the number of family or friends to be seated.

Living Room / Great Room

10. If you want a baby grand or grand piano plan for it. Get a player if you want it for gatherings.

11. Laundries, pantries and walk-in closets include an enclosed walking area. In either case, the space needed is more than the typical allocation if that space is part of a room. The walking space may be part of the master bedroom instead of enclosed in the closet if spacing is an issue. A laundry can have a sink with a drying area above and counter over front loading machines for a small but useful space.

Cabinetry for All Areas ●

12. It is helpful to have the cabinet drawings posted in the area for everyone to see during construction so the height and placement of electrical and water can be measured.
13. Additional televisions are sometime used in offices, kitchens, guest bedrooms, exercise areas, etc. These need to be added prior to cabinetry and electrical considerations.
14. Plan for appropriate water, electrical and cabinetry in the office, guest area or master bedroom. A wet bar, refrigeration, wine storage, etc can complete an area.
15. Wooden ceilings require appropriate HVAC, lighting and sprinkler placement.
16. Required sprinklers are added in all areas according to local building codes. A stamped drawing from your architect or builder should ensure this.
17. Ceiling fans necessitate electrical, secure bracing and appropriate lighting options.

Office ●

18. Many luxury homes have wood detailing in the office. The cabinetry is a start but crown molding, coffered ceilings, wood paneling etc. are often used. Contemporary homes have other options but the feeling of a special workspace is important.
19. It is best to buy the equipment before the office is designed so the spacing is adequate. Luckily, equipment is becoming more compact making retrofitting easier.

● Media Room

20. Media components have not changed much in size. Placing them under the television or in a quickly accessible area may be an option for convenience.
21. Plan for the appropriate electrical connections, conveniently located, for all TVs and electronics.
22. If recliners are used in rows, these chairs need to be purchased early to determine the spacing for electrical needs and to allow for extension of the foot rest without impeding traffic flow.
23. If the seating is tiered, the concrete or framing/electrical will also be determined by the spacing requirements.



**Fiber optic stars
are a lighting option.**

24. Wood paneling, sconce lighting, etc. is often used in the media area and needs to be spaced with the tiers.

25. Don't forget the popcorn! Popcorn equipment in the media room requires either space for a free standing unit or cabinetry space. Most countertop models need more space than the typical distance between upper and lower cabinets.

26. Refrigeration and storage for other refreshments may need to be included in the media area as well.

27. "Media" includes what is important to you. That may be your vinyl collection or your BluRay movies. Plan your storage around your collections and needs.

28. Speakers can be recessed or built-in with storage in a media room.

Dining

29. Extra bracing is needed to hang a chandelier. Additional lighting will possibly be needed in addition to the chandelier.

30. What is the expected traffic pattern of dining guests from an outdoor area or living area through your house? Accessibility is key for comfortable flow from area to area.

31. Furniture or built-in cabinetry or a mix of both can be used. Marjorie Meriwether Post's home in Washington, DC (Post Cereals, built Mar-a-Lago) has a square dining room with angled cabinetry in each corner showcasing her favorite sets of dishes to be rotated to the table.

Kitchen

32. Dishes should be stored near the place of first use. Don't forget that dishes can be a great focal point for a kitchen or dining room.

33. Decorative items can be placed in glass front cabinetry. These cabinets should be a focal point in the area.

34. The kitchen needs to have work stations depending on the activities of your particular family.

35. A work station in today's kitchen might be a vegetable sink, microwave or refrigerator/freezer. Another could be a baking area with everything from ingredients to pans in close proximity.

36. Place items close to place of first use and customize areas depending on the needs of the primary users.

37. Drawers or pull out shelves make for easy access in the kitchen.

38. Determine the width of oven needed or the necessity of two different temperatures to decide between two smaller or one larger.



39. Dishwasher drawers allow for added capability. They can be used in a butler's pantry, on either side of the kitchen sink or in combinations with the main or secondary sinks in the area.

40. The refrigerator columns and drawers make it easier to design a kitchen with adequate refrigeration and freezing space.

41. If you want to clear the table without stacks of dishes sitting around, buy a big sink!

42. Magnetic induction cooktops are very fast and easy to clean.

43. Determine how many burners are needed for your cooktop and if you want a griddle.

44. Sometimes a long countertop is better for work and serving than having the space broken with an appliance.

45. Landing spaces near the refrigerator and oven do come in handy.

46. Plan an appliance "garage" for heavy mixers and often used items with the countertop extended into the space.



Kitchen Garage

47. The most convenient storage is between upper and lower cabinets so if you don't need a countertop in the area, consider a pantry type cabinet or adding the appliance garage in this space.

48. A countertop in a walk-in pantry is great for an electronics' charging area or phone/message station. Secondary appliances can also be plugged in here.

49. Provide separate areas for food and cleaning products.

50. An adjoining prep area or butler's pantry is great for additional dishes of prepared food, items coming and going or pet considerations. Separate accordingly.

51. Avoid ceiling fans and light overlap.



52. Consider the number of people for eat-in kitchen areas, four people need a 48" table and 60" is recommended for 6 people. Allow 2-1/2" for chair pull out space. Window seats are more compact and not used as much in homes due to climbing over one another. If children will use the area for homework, factor that in as well.

53. It is more comfortable to sit facing someone than in a line for countertop seating.

54. Pull out trash and recycling drawers are very handy!

55. For a kitchen with multiple cooks, 4' is a good width between an island and cabinetry. At least 3' is needed and it doesn't have to be the same on all sides.

56. Laminated wood floors are now used everywhere, but reclaimed floors typically have more character and may be used in appropriate situations. Being susceptible to water may encourage the use of tile or stone in kitchens and baths. With laminate, the continuity of continuous material is an option.

57. If you are using the garage, consider catering space and conceal the door from guest's arrival.

● Bedroom

58. Bedrooms appear best if you see the headboard wall when entering the room. Consider door, cabinetry, closet and window placement accordingly.

59. The bedrooms are personal space with specific storage, reading and study needs

60. Start with the size of the bed. The largest width of space needed is for two twins with a table in between.



61. Night stands have been replaced by large bed size chests and they provide functional storage.

62. Between the end of the bed and a fireplace you need 6' for a 3' sofa and 3' of walkway. For a sofa and adjoining chairs, 9' will be needed.

63. The same space works for television viewing areas. A 12' x 12' space is a minimum for this area.

64. Add ceiling lighting for reading in bed with bedside switches.

65. Will you use the storage in a closet that requires a ladder? A short person cannot access even 8' closet shelf.
66. Everyone likes the way the closet components look but make them work for you. Often clothes are hung by season and not by length!
67. You can measure how many lineal feet of clothing storage you need to determine hanging rods if you currently have your clothes hanging. The same is true for different types of cabinetry storage. Measure what you have and consider expansions if needed.
68. It is great to have valet rods that extend out from your closet cabinetry to stage the next day's or next week's outfits. It can also come in handy when packing for a trip! You need 14" depth for a valet rod.
69. Consider beverage and snack needs in bedroom areas and medicinal refrigeration needs near the bathrooms.
70. The dressing area can be a convenient spot to charge the phones.
71. Musical options need to be considered for wiring.
72. Rugs should always accommodate the furniture and walking space. Whether the dining area of the bedroom, the grouping of the furniture should fit on the rug with at least 2-1/2" for chair extension or walking. In a big master bedroom, 3' is more ideal. The bigger the rug, the bigger the room will look.

Bathroom



73. If you want privacy while bathing, consider a separate area instead of the tubs in the middle of the room. Include a regular or large tub in the master bath for resale value in addition to the shower.
74. Baths can be huge or more compact and still function well.
75. Considering how many people prefer showers, selecting a good shower head is important. Men may prefer rain heads.

76. Walk-in showers without the need of a shower door are great looking and easier to maintain. They don't need to be huge and be warmer if they are not. The length will determine if curbing is needed. Hand sprays are a nice addition. These are great options for a full water spray experience. The best option for function is enough space to eliminate curbing with a side drain.



77. Should you use two framed mirrors or one wall-to-wall mirror from the ceiling down? It depends on the style of the home. If you want the space to look as big as possible, use one big mirror but frame it with tile, molding or detailing of some type.

78. With one big mirror, surface mount the lighting. Your mirror installers will drill for the electrical wires. With two framed mirrors, wall sconces are usually used. Add recessed lighting above either.

79. Add cabinetry for enclosed storage of clothing, linens and laundry.

80. Pedestal sinks are beautiful but require storage elsewhere.

81. If you don't have room for a bidet, try a Toto Washlet or similar option. Special electrical arrangements may be required.

82. Try to include a bank of drawers between the cabinets under the double sinks in the bathrooms that are big enough for clothing or medicinal items.

Garage

83. Finished garage floors are easier to maintain.

84. Consider what is to be stored between adding storage to the garage. Adjustable shelving gives you flexibility.

Backyard

85. Exterior patio areas need to be planned just like interior spaces depending on the number to be seated and the function of the space.

86. A grilling area needs landing space and can have an extension for bar seating that becomes the bar for larger functions.

87. Water features are inviting anywhere but also masks traffic noise.

88. Patio depths need to be adequate to create the outdoor room look that has become popular.

89. Allow openings in concrete for sufficient landscaping.

90. Trees should also be in scale with the home.

91. Plants and trees should enhance the home by transitioning to the ground.

92. Consider patio finishes and their proximity to the interior for good flow.



Security



93. Security with Smartphone or tablet allows you to check your home conveniently.
94. Safes are best in the floor and hidden from view. Gun safes are also included in cabinetry needs.
95. If you want a safe room, consider the needs of the space as you would any other area.



Final Thoughts

96. If patterned carpet is being used, check the parallel walls for squareness.
97. The best storage for vacuums is a closet that allows wheel-in of the vacuum without lifting each time.
98. As you accumulate art, delete less-than-favorite pieces or move them to secondary areas. Try to keep compatible pieces that visually connect together in areas. Group collections together and highlight them with lighting.
99. “Smart electrical” for area lighting can be controlled with the touch of one button is a great addition.
100. Most accessories inside or out that are shorter than 2’ need to be on a table, so keep the pots, etc. sizeable enough to be noticed. The bigger exterior pots and live plants can be accompanied by some shorter ones, but these need to be at least 12’ x 12”. The smaller the pot, the higher the maintenance.
101. Most homeowners accumulate favorite pieces over the years. These can be the focus for your design details.



Here's to great interiors and refined living spaces!

Sherry Hauser

