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EC77-2043 Housing Needs and Wants

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Housing Needs and Wants

What are your plans for providing for future housing needs? Building a new house? Remodeling? Or buying or renting a house, apartment or pre-built home?

Whatever your choice, you want to select a home that expresses the things which are important to and will work well for your family. To achieve this type of a "you" house, first read the extension circular, "Why You Choose a Home — Castle, Cave or Igloo," pages 12-16. After reading and discussing each point have every member of the family on a separate piece of paper indicate the importance of each statement in the housing values checklist. What is important to your family?

Housing Values Checklist

For your own enjoyment check these statements as they represent your feelings. This will help to point out your housing values and to provide for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Fairly Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. "A house that is **comfortable** to live in."
2. "A house that is **beautiful** to look at."
3. "A house that is **economical** to maintain."
4. "A house that has **privacy** for each family member."
5. "A house that friends and neighbors will **admire**."
6. "A house that will help the family to **work** and **play** together.
7. "A house that will give **quiet** and **peace** of mind."
8. "A house that is **adequate** for recreation."
9. "A house that **meets the needs** of all family members."
10. "A house that gives the **feeling** of belonging."
11. "A house that makes for **ease** in living."
12. "A house that **protects** the health of the family."

Perhaps you haven't given much thought — or at least put into words — how you feel about some of these values. Which values did all of you agree on?

Use the knowledge of what is important to your family to make a listing of "Needs" and "Wants." For the most satisfactory results, let everyone in the family contribute to this list.

**Must Have**

**Would Like**

**Extras (as money and space permits)**
Now look over your list. Have you considered all aspects of your housing? It should include social and psychological needs as well as physical needs.

Be sure to take into account the future needs of your family. Where are you now in the family life cycle? Read the extension circular "Why You Choose a Home — Castle, Cave or Igloo," pages 1-11. What does the crystal ball tell of your future?

A house that you plan to live in for the rest of your life must be able to adjust to changing needs. With this additional thought, fill out the following checklist of features a house should have to meet your present and future needs. Use this list to evaluate and compare houses or house plans you look at.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Check Sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Features a house should have (in priority listing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**NUMBER OF LEVELS**

- **One story**
  - For:
    - is the best plan for a small house
    - avoids stairways
    - is preferable for children and the aged
    - is a good plan for flat land
  - Against:
    - requires more land for a larger house
    - is more expensive
    - gives less natural privacy

- **Multiple story**
  - For:
    - is less expensive (less roof, foundation)
    - is less costly to heat
    - has good possibilities for separation of activity areas
    - allows more yard space
    - is more formal than one story
  - Against:
    - is less desirable for children and the aged (tiring or hazardous stairways)

- **Raised Ranch**
  - For:
    - gives larger windows on lower level than possible in typical basement.
    - gives enclosed steps for entrance
    - provides good possibilities for separation of activity areas
    - advantages similar to multiple story
  - Against:
    - may look awkward on lot
    - has stairways which make it less desirable for children and the aged
    - entry stairs can carry noise from one level to the other

**DIFFERENT SHAPES**

- **Square**
  - For:
    - has less foundation for the square footage
    - has efficient plan for multiple level
  - Against:
    - has a dark center
    - has poor natural ventilation in the center
    - has boxy appearance
• Rectangular

For
- has more flexible design than the square
- is an economical shape
- fits well on long, narrow or deep lots
- provides privacy for backyard
- provides possibility for good traffic patterns and separation of activity areas

Against
- can be an uninteresting design
- requires a larger lot than the square

• L- and T-shapes

For
- have interesting appearance
- provide shelter and privacy for an outdoors living area
- provide good natural ventilation
- provide good possibilities for separation of activity areas

Against
- have the extra construction cost of additional corners
- possibly have higher heating and plumbing costs

• Other (U- or H-shaped)

For
- provide good possibilities for separation of activity areas
- have good design for unusual lot
- have interesting appearances

Against
- can be very expensive
- require a large lot

The next step in making your decisions will be to use your knowledge of house styles and shapes and your list of wants and needs in selecting a floor plan.

Things To Do To Make Decisions Easier

1. Discuss the values checklist with all members of the family involved.
2. Talk with relatives outside the immediate family. Is it possible someone might be moving into your home later on?
3. Check costs for some of your wants and needs. Costs might make some of these wants and needs less essential in relation to others.
4. Use the “House Check Sheet” whenever you look at a house or plan.
5. Observe the different house shapes and styles of houses in your area. Which are most popular? Why?
6. If you plan to build think of the house shape as you select a site.
7. Ask yourself.
   - Do we want a house that is rather formal?
   - Do we want a house that is very informal?
   - Will stairways be a problem (young children or older adults)?
   - What style house looks best with land contour in your area?
   - How important is a private yard?

Adapted by Betsy Gabb, Housing Specialist, from material prepared by Gwen Cooper, former Gage County Extension Agent, and Mary Dale Christensen, Former Housing Specialist.