

1977

## EC77-2044 Evaluating Floor Plans

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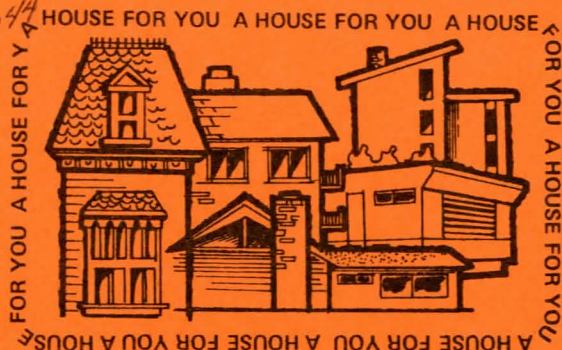
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# EVALUATING FLOOR PLANS

Have you and your family ever started on a cross-country trip knowing where you wanted to go, but not knowing for sure which route you wanted to take?

Studying and evaluating a floor plan can help one make a decision in housing in the same way that a road map helps us to decide which highway to take to reach our destination. It may even help us find a shortcut or an easier way.

If you've worked with housing choices and family wants, needs and values, now it is time to put that dream house of yours to the test! Is it convenient, livable, practical and satisfactory for your family?

So take a pencil, sketch your future or present home's floor plan or select one which you like, and let's begin.

## TEST 1: GOOD ZONING

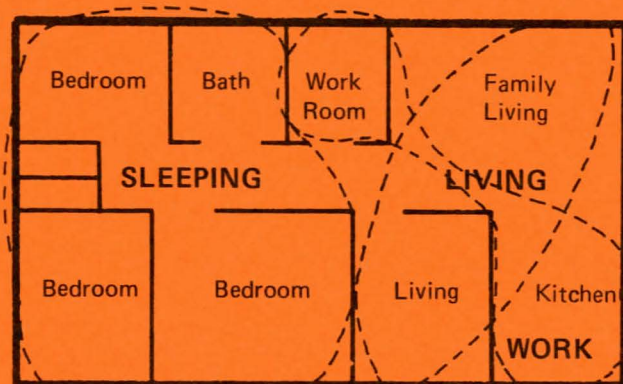
A house is made up of three basic areas or zones; a work area, a living area and a sleeping area. The work zone is mainly the kitchen, laundry and/or utility locations. The living area may be one specific place in the house such as the living room, dining room and front entrance. There may be two or more areas on the same level, such as a living room and family room. There could also be living areas on more than one level of the home.

The sleeping or privacy zones include all bedrooms and bath facilities. Grouping these rooms in one part of the house will separate them from the noise and activities of the living and working areas.

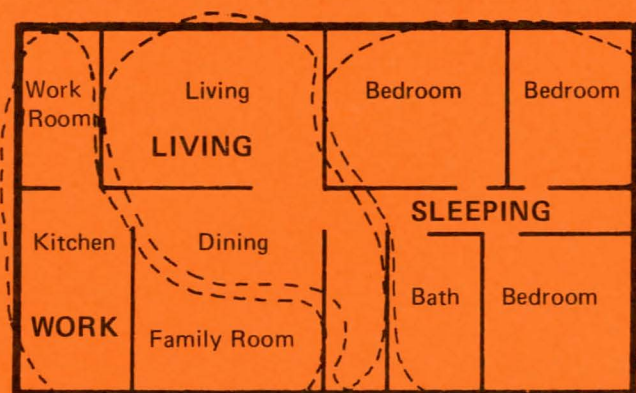
As you study a floor plan look for these three areas or zones. They should be distinct and reasonably separated. If the areas overlap, there may be trouble ahead!

To separate noisy and quiet areas you will want to have good sound buffers. Closets, stairways and

thick walls will cushion sound. In other areas, only the view of an area may need to be blocked. Curtains, screens and dividers will provide visual buffers.



Areas are not defined and tend to overlap. Work areas are mixed in with living areas and separated from each other. Plan creates extra steps, extra noise and is inconvenient.



House plan divides into three well defined zones: a. sleeping; b. living; c. work

Lay a piece of tissue paper over your floor plan. With large circles mark the three basic zones. Are they well-defined or are the areas scattered? Is the zoning good or poor? Do you have the kinds of buffers you need?



## TEST 2: TRAFFIC PATTERNS

Were you ever in a home where it seemed you needed stop and go lights or at least a yield or right-of-way sign? This confusion may have been caused by poor traffic patterns. By a traffic pattern, we mean the path taken to move from room to room, or through a room. In other words, how you get from one place to another.

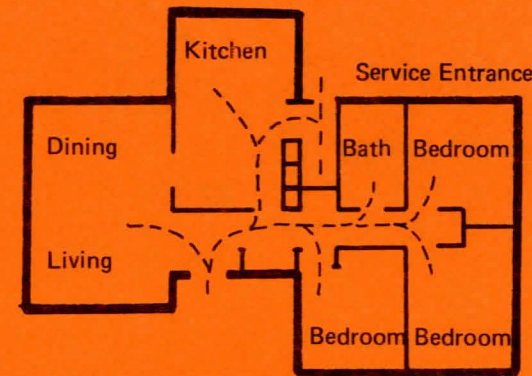
### A GOOD TRAFFIC PATTERN WILL:

1. Be direct, convenient, logical
2. Not interfere with furniture arrangement
3. Not interrupt activities within a room
4. Help separate private areas from activity areas
5. Use a central hall to control movement
6. Go through ends or corners of a room rather than through the middle
7. Prevent the kitchen or living room from becoming "Grand Central Station"
8. Provide logical and easy flow of traffic between similar zones on different levels of the home
9. Help connect similar activity areas such as living room—dining room, dining room—kitchen and kitchen—patio

Note the traffic patterns in these floor plans.



Traffic through the kitchen work area and diagonally across the living room is undesirable. Privacy, quiet and good furniture arrangement are impossible.



Traffic from either entrance can go directly to the central hall which provides access to all areas of the house. Traffic pathways can make the difference between controlled and convenient movement in a home or hectic and confusing movement.

### Check traffic patterns carefully.

Using a second sheet of tracing paper, mark the traffic patterns for your home or floor plan. Does your plan have good traffic patterns? Do you see how important traffic patterns are? What does this pattern say about the type of floor covering you might want? What about the width of busy crossroads?

## TEST 3: SPACE FOR STORAGE

How much storage space do you need? It's hard to give a definite answer but chances are you'd like more space than you have now. However, be sure you plan for the best possible use of the space.

### STORAGE GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER

1. A minimum of 3 to 4 per cent of the living area of your home should be storage space. Up to 10 per cent of the living area may be allowed for storage.
2. Store items:
  - . Where they are first used.
  - . At convenient heights for persons using them.
  - . Where they are easy to see and reach.
  - . By their frequency of use (items used frequently should be given the most convenient space).
3. Provide storage:
  - . That protects the article from fire, dust, moths, etc.

. That uses all the space available (step shelves utilize the upper half of a cupboard that otherwise might go unused).

. That is flexible and could be used for a variety of purposes (storage turntables for spices in the kitchen, cosmetics in the bath, or small items in the garage).

Only you can tell how much you have to store and how much space you need.

Think for a minute of all the things you have to store. Now, using another sheet of tracing paper laid over your floor plan, shade in all areas which would be used for storage. Is there a place for everything you want to store? In most cases you'll want to provide extra storage space. There are many ways you can stretch the space you have. An extra shelf, a curtain rod in the closet for belts or covered boxes can provide extra storage.

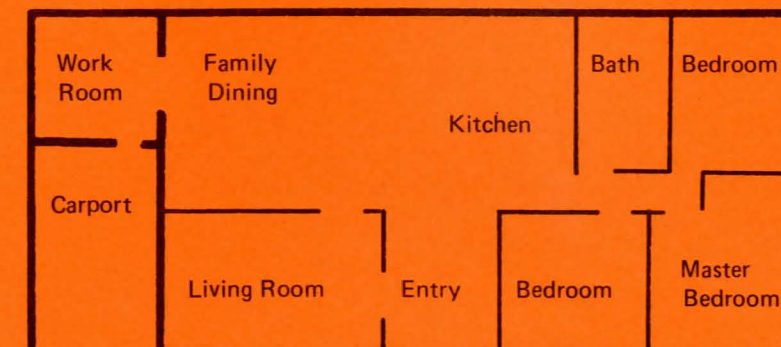
## TEST 4: SPACE FOR LIVING

This statement may sound rather silly; but house plans can be deceptive. Traffic paths and storage areas cannot be used as living space. Have you ever stopped to consider the amount of space needed for a swinging door to operate? Take a look at all the doorways in your plan. When you take away the traffic lanes, storage areas and space required to operate doors, the floor space remaining is the true "living area" of your plan.

On the same sheet of paper used for Test 3 draw in the amount of space needed for the doors to operate. Notice how this cuts into the amount of usable floor space.

## TEST 5: AREAS FOR FAMILY ACTIVITIES

What does your family like to do? Do you entertain often? Do you have a hobby? A floor plan should provide space for the kinds of things your family likes to do.



Do you feel the zoning in the plan is good or bad? Why or why not?

Do you feel the plan allows for good or bad traffic patterns?

Using the **Activity Checklist**, mark the activities your family does. Then check it with your floor plan. Do you have an area for each activity or are you refinishing furniture in the bathtub? Would you have conflicting use of space at the same time? Studying, piano practicing, shop noise and television viewing should not be planned for the same time and place. Mark where you would place each activity. (Use different color pencils on tracing paper over the plan.)

This should be discussed with family members. Better to discover what everyone is planning now than to find conflicts later. This can also be a reminder of where you need electrical outlets or facilities for special activities.

## CONCLUSION

By the time you've given a floor plan these tests you'll have a good idea of its strong and weak points. Most important, you will have a more realistic idea of what it would be like to live in a particular home, or ways you might change your future or present home.

These tests are fun and quick to do; but they can make the difference in finding a home that meets or could be adapted to meet your particular family's needs.

## TO MAKE DECISIONS EASIER

1. Find plans in newspapers, magazines, plan books, catalogs and lumberyards.
2. Study as many house plans as you can.
3. Clip and save features you like in each plan.
4. Contact lumberyards, builders, and real estate agents to find out the current square footage cost of building a house \_\_\_\_\_; of an old house \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Study the floor plan below and answer the questions as a review.



## ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

Check those activities which pertain to you and your family.

### FAMILY GROUP

1. ☐ Lounging—indoors
2. ☐ Lounging—outdoors
3. ☐ Watching television
4. ☐ Listening to radio, tapes, records
5. ☐ Playing a musical instrument
6. ☐ Working on hobbies (each person)
7. ☐ Reading
8. ☐ Talking on the telephone
9. ☐ Family meals—indoors
10. ☐ Outdoor meals
11. ☐ Children's play—indoors
12. ☐ Children's play—outdoors
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_

### WORK ACTIVITIES

1. ☐ Meal preparation and clean up
2. ☐ Barbecue or speciality cooking
3. ☐ Planning menus, market orders
4. ☐ Food preservation
5. ☐ Household business
6. ☐ Using telephone—family business
7. ☐ Family laundry—machine
8. ☐ Family laundry—hand
9. ☐ Drying clothes
10. ☐ Drip drying clothes
11. ☐ Dampening clothes for ironing
12. ☐ Ironing
13. ☐ Sewing at machine
14. ☐ Hand sewing
15. ☐ Cutting out garments
16. ☐ Pressing while sewing
17. ☐ Sitting to rest between work periods
18. ☐ Making home repairs and "building things"
19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_

## SOCIAL - GUESTS - OUTSIDERS

1. ☐ Guests' wraps—removal & storage
2. ☐ Visiting with guests—entire family
3. ☐ Visiting with guests—personal
4. ☐ Company meals
5. ☐ Viewing movies and slides
6. ☐ Children's games
7. ☐ Adult games
8. ☐ Dancing
9. ☐ Holding a meeting in the home
10. ☐ Receiving business callers
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

### PRIVATE ACTIVITIES

1. ☐ Place for person to be alone
2. ☐ Sleeping—adults
3. ☐ Sleeping—children
4. ☐ Sleeping—guests
5. ☐ Guest washing facilities, bathing, etc.
6. ☐ Bathing—each person
7. ☐ Toilet, washing facilities, family
8. ☐ Personal grooming—each person
9. ☐ Study requiring deep concentration—each person
10. ☐ Work on hobbies which require privacy or deep concentration

Taken from: Planning Your Home, "Selecting the Plan," Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville.

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