

home design guide

Walls, Doors & Window Problems and How To Fix Them

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Sometimes when I meet clients about a new home or remodel, I often hear about design regrets in their current home and they share with me what they DO NOT want in their new home, specifically problems associated with dysfunctional design or poor quality construction. Learning from these conversations over the years, I'm glad to share a few ideas here that may help you to consider that go beyond what you see when you review a floor plan:

WALLS:

Problem: You can hear noise through the walls. Be sure you know up front which wall framing system the home designer or builder will use. There are several options. Metal studs are usually the least expensive and are most often used by production home builders. But be careful – these wall systems have poor sound buffering characteristics. Normal conversation and televisions can easily be heard from one room to another. Wood stud walls are denser and help mitigate sound better, but they are still not ideal.

How To Fix It: Review floor plans with your designer and identify which walls require sound privacy – especially guest bathrooms and bedrooms. Design these walls with Sound Transmission Class (STC) ratings – which may require thicker walls, additional layers of gypsum wallboard and sound attenuation insulation. It's well worth the investment.

DOORS:

Problem: The Master Bathroom Toilet Closet is too small. It could be the door, especially if it swings in. There is little room to maneuver to turn and close the door when the door swing uses up the available floor area.

How To Fix It: In this case, the proper solution would be to use a pocket door or flip the door to swing out. When the door swings out, it is naturally kept closed most of the time, like a closet door, which also helps hide the toilet from view.

Problem: Hearing sounds through doors. Again, this is a sound attenuation issue. The least expensive doors are hollow core doors – doors that are light and have a slight echo when you knock on them. They are most prevalently used in new construction.

How to Fix It: Work with your designer to identify which rooms require sound privacy and specify solid core doors in those locations, especially in guest bathrooms and bedrooms.

WINDOWS:

Problem: The sunshine through the windows heats up rooms. One of the least expensive windows is aluminum single pane windows with clear glass. They have the poorest energy efficiency of all your window choices and are known for solar heat gain through the glass and the frame, especially if windows face the south or west.

How to Fix It: One of the best up-front investments in your new home is to specify better quality windows. New hybrid windows made of wood and PVC, or fiberglass or vinyl windows help prevent heat transfer through the frame, and tinted double pane windows block the sun's UV rays and diminish the heat transfer through the glass.

You can do your own research and discuss any concerns or problems you've experienced in the past with your home designer and builder. You can adjust your building material or product specifications based on a value versus cost analysis that makes sense for you and your family. Remember that "The difference is in the details". ●

Do you have questions about home design or remodeling?



Contact Tony at tweremeichik@canin.com or visit his company's website at www.canin.com. Years of research in custom home design, remodeling and home building has led Tony Weremeichik, Principal of Canin Associates' Architectural Design Studio, to be a strong advocate for home buyers and home owners to get the best design and construction value for their money. He leads clients and builders through a well-orchestrated design process that provides his clients with the utmost attention and creative design solutions.