

LESS IS MORE ... IN SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Using LESS to build or alter your home is a move towards sustainable housing. All building materials and construction work have an adverse impact on our environment

The 'bigger-is-better' trend in our consumer-driven culture has led to expanding houses on crowded land. The average house size has doubled in the same period that occupancy numbers has halved. Why do some need all this extra space?

Have you ever considered adopting the 'enough' principle? By using LESS (but enough to satisfy your needs) we could downshift from consumer-driven attitudes to a more modest, contented and co-operative lifestyle

Why should your home be a money pit? Why work long hours to be a slave to your home? Cheaper options are available. Homes only need to be comfortable, efficient, affordable and durable

Smaller homes use LESS processed materials, LESS energy for heating and cooling, LESS furniture and fittings. They also generate LESS maintenance and waste

HOUSE DESIGN

We can reduce the footprint size of a new home by designing spaces better. Small homes can be spacious .. see the Floor Plan of a 3 bedroom home which has an area of only 100m². Wasted space is minimal and the room sizes are sufficient. The design accommodates an average size family in reasonable comfort at modest cost

Suggestions for SAVING SPACE:

- A Laundry can be just a deep cupboard for a washing machine and trough
- One Bathroom is sufficient if carefully placed and designed with dual access
- One adequate Meals area makes a separate Dining Room (which may rarely get used) unnecessary
- Bedrooms need not be large for sleeping and dressing ... if most of your time is spent in the Living Area
- Use a convertible sofa as an extra bed rather than an extra Bedroom
- Storage space is available under beds, under floors, and in the roof space.
- Avoid double garages (which can become double storage areas)

STORAGE can take up so much space. We all acquire more possessions than we need. If we have not used it in the last twelve months we may not need to retain it. Retaining surplus is just hoarding 'stuff' that may be useful to others

SMALLER SPACES can be made to feel larger by removing clutter and re-decorating in lighter colours with large patterns on furnishings. Larger windows will admit more light and can form a wider link with outdoor spaces

A compact TWO STOREY design has several benefits:

- Better energy-efficiency than sprawling single storey home designs
- A lesser footprint size on the land
- Maximum outdoor space and separation distance (more sunlight, better ventilation, less noise problems)
- Elevated views in a congested suburban area
- Less building materials when using lightweight construction

EXTENSIONS

Before deciding on an extension it is worth considering your space needs and the wasted spaces in the existing building. With some assistance from an experienced retro-fit designer you may be able to make better use of existing spaces. A review of your usage of the home and some minor internal/external alterations may satisfy your needs .. with much less cost and improved efficiencies

The most effective use of space occurs when that space has more than one purpose, eg combined Living and Kitchen area, Bathroom and Laundry area, Bedroom and Study area. Thus small homes can be composed of less large spaces, rather than more small spaces

Using LESS in a materialistic way should be balanced by using MORE imagination and persistence to change the ingrained attitudes of our home building culture

Rather than accept current standards I challenge home owners (and their designers) to do more with LESS ... to extract better value with site-specific designs for modest homes which cost LESS, use LESS power and water, and have LESS impact on our environment

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