

Little Things

A builder can offer suggestions regarding many little touches and amenities to include in your plans that enhance ease of operation and flexibility once you move-in to your new home.

Despite the close working relationship that develops throughout the project, the builder cannot know all of what you might contemplate in the future, nor all of the things that would be just plain “handy” for you today.

As with anything that one designs, there are always things you think of afterward that you wish had been included in the project. Some of these are simple changes, easily remedied, but other once simple additions can be all but impossible to make once primary construction is complete.

Taking advantage of the experiences of many, what follows is a list of things that have come up in the past, discovered over time spent in a new dwelling. Some could be items you want to include in your design. Others may stimulate thoughts of important considerations currently overlooked.

ROUGH-INS

- Empty conduit from the basement to the second floor for future wiring
- Central vacuum ducting
- Security system and exterior cameras
- Under driveway conduit to accommodate future wiring or sprinklers
- Bathroom grab bars
- Stair lift
- Wiring for TV, speakers and home automation
- Exterior speakers
- Network cables from each room wired to a central hub

WIRING

- Bathroom outlet(s)
- Bathroom night-light
- Two-way (three-way) switches
- Plugs inside closets
- Vacuum Outlet(s)
- Closet lights
- Four outlets on each side of the bed (Master)
- Bedroom Reading light(s)
- Bedside light switch(s)
- Outlets with USB charging connections
- Lots of kitchen counter outlets
- Outlet above kitchen cupboards
- Two dedicated circuits for entertainment system
- Floor outlets (in large rooms)
- Attic light with switch outside access way
- Attic outlet(s)
- Garden outlets
- Switch for garage door opener inside
- Seasonal outlet(s) under soffit with interior switch
- Outlet(s) in hard to reach places
- Clock plug
- Dedicated circuit(s) for workshop or garage
- 220v supply for equipment in workshop or garage

STRUCTURE

- Sound-proofing in certain rooms and areas
- Radiant floor heating
- Accessible design
- Wide stairs for easy furniture moving
- Removable hand rails for furniture moves
- Multiple hose-bibs (front, side, back, deck, etc.)
- Hot & cold hose bib (dog washing)
- Bathroom cabinet for grooming appliances
- Pocket door(s)
- Garage drain
- Gas line for deck grill

STORAGE

- More closet space than you think you'll need
- Ample space for garbage, recycle and kitchen waste
- Bicycle storage
- Fire wood
- Towel racks
- Cutting board storage
- Wine rack
- Pet food storage
- Fire extinguisher(s)
- Full-height broom closet
- Emergency supply kit closet
- Storage capacity for specific items
- Enough space to hang long clothing
- Seasonal decoration storage
- Tool and hardware storage

SOME WORDS TO THE WISE

Take pictures of the walls in each room before they are closed. It provides a record where the wiring, ducts and structure are located, and helps immeasurably with additions and changes down the road.

Universal Design aka "accessibility" is something to seriously consider. Aging is an inevitability and it's relatively easy to plan your dream house in a way that helps mitigate the changing needs of time. Doing so has many benefits, including higher resale desirability, and the process is not inconsistent with any of your current goals or aspirations. Including this in your design adds significant to the longevity and value of your new home. Details can be found at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation web site cmhc-schl.gc.ca under the Accessible & Adaptable Housing tab.

Make or download a digital copy of all product manuals and installation guides for the equipment used in your new home. Keep all the originals in a single location, in a plastic storage file. It is amazing how handy this information can be in the future.

Of all the appliances in your home, two often overlooked energy consumers are the refrigerator and ceiling fans. In most cases the refrigerator consumes more power than the stove. It is a good idea to check the energy consumption ratings of these devices before making your purchase decisions. The lowest price may not end up being the cheapest price.

If you plan to have a finished basement in the future, consider having the builder do that job when the house is being built. The men and equipment are on site so this is a fairly simple task, costing substantially less than having it done weeks or months later.

FINALLY

By definition, this will never be a "complete" list but the hope is that it brings to mind some things that might otherwise have been overlooked. Everyone's needs are different. Those often change over time. If you think of something that should be included here, please let us know. We all benefit from the experience of many.