

Your House—Continued

His job is largely to guide economical spending in the purchase of materials, oftentimes by recommending a slightly more expensive material which will stand up under years of service better and be less expensive in the long run.

The psychological engineer has the difficult task of correlating all the elements of the building so that they revolve around the dominant features—the human beings who will live in the house. The materials engineer's field is to relate the properties of the various materials to certain building stresses and strains. The psychological engineer's field is to relate materials and forms to human stresses and strains, as we have briefly illustrated.

A house becomes a home, it has been said, when it is designed to live in. This should be amended to specify effective living. And one cannot live effectively even in a palace if it is arranged and used to cause any avoidable fatigue, embarrassment, annoyance, or accident.

Designing and constructing a house to be a genius on a psychological test, however, does not assure in any sense that after people have moved into the house it will still retain its originally high rating. Thoughtless use and poor arrangement of kitchen tables and other details of equipment lower the IQ of many a house that started out with prospects of a brilliant career of efficient service.

Science News-Letter, November 17, 1928

Syphilis Increasing

Medicine

The American people are gradually becoming more and more "syphilized," reports Dr. Charles W. Burr, professor of mental diseases at the University of Pennsylvania, basing his opinion on his many years' experience with patients suffering from the end conditions of this disease.

Change in the type of immigration during the last few generations and the letting down of social standards, particularly those which placed a bar between adolescent boys and girls, are the causes to which Dr. Burr attributes the increase.

Immigrants from Eastern Europe, where the disease is more prevalent, have brought it into this country in large numbers. Modern promiscuity, which has developed since the war, is playing a large part in the work of "syphilizing" the country.

Science News-Letter, November 17, 1928

Fifty Questions to Ask Your House

(Each question answered "Yes" is favorable, a "No" is unfavorable. Rate your house by this questionnaire.)

1. Does the main entrance lead into a vestibule?
2. Is the stairway to the second floor accessible without passing through rooms on the first floor?
3. Are dining-room and living-room so situated that callers in the living-room cannot watch the progress of a meal?
4. Can one enter the bathroom without passing through other rooms or being seen by persons in other rooms?
5. Is the bathroom constructed to prevent the transmission of noises?
6. Are there opaque shades on all windows which prevent silhouettes of persons inside being seen when the room is lighted?
7. Can all doors be opened irrespective of the position of any other door?
8. Are all doors so arranged that when opened they do not cut down light from the windows?
9. Is the water heating system such that hot water can be obtained almost immediately when a faucet is opened?
10. Are all bells non-startling?
11. Are the house numerals in a place where they can be readily seen both day and night?
12. Is there a roomy clothes closet at the front entrance for storing coats and rubbers?
13. Is each bedroom provided with a roomy clothes closet?
14. Are electric switches placed so that it is not necessary to walk into a dark room in search of them?
15. Is the telephone so placed that one's conversation is private?
16. Are the kitchen shelves so arranged that the contents of the highest and the lowest shelf can be reached without stretching or low bending?
17. Can mail be left inside the house by use of a slot or small opening?
18. Can refuse and garbage be disposed of without the use of an unsanitary outside receptacle (by means of incinerator, etc.)?
19. Is the house planned and constructed so that noise transmission from one room to other points of the house is practically eliminated?
20. Are all rooms free from low, slanting ceilings?
21. Can all door locks be opened by a single master key?
22. Are there lights with conveniently located switches in all closets?
23. Is the house situated in a quiet place?
24. Is there toe room under all cupboards in the kitchen?
25. Is the house of fireproof construction?
26. Are the floors slip-proof?
27. Is there a safety handrail beside the bathtub?
28. Do all the rugs lie flat and stationary on the floor?
29. Are all steps seven and a half inches high and nine inches deep?
30. Are all staircases straight?
31. Are all staircases provided with hand rails at a convenient height?
32. Are the cellar ceiling and pipes high enough to make stooping unnecessary?
33. Are the door knobs set in far enough to prevent bruising knuckles on the door frame when closing?
34. Are radiators shielded so as to prevent burning one's self?
35. Is there freedom from the danger of ice and snow falling from the roof in the path of persons below?
36. Is there a safe and convenient means for disposing of safety razor blades, toothpaste tubes, etc.?
37. Is there a fire screen covering the entire front of the fireplace?
38. Are all walks even and level?
39. Does the kitchen adjoin the dining-room?
40. Are the kitchen furnishings so arranged in relation to each other (i. e., distance from stove to sink, etc.) that needless steps and waste motions are eliminated?
41. Is the telephone centrally located?
42. Is fuel stored conveniently near the heating plants (i. e., fireplace, furnace, etc.)?
43. Is the dish cupboard accessible from both dining-room and kitchen?
44. Is there a lavatory and toilet on the first floor?
45. Is there a bedroom on the first floor?
46. Is there a clothes chute from the second floor?
47. Can kitchen utensils be placed or stored where they are used, so that they can be grasped without unnecessary motions and effort?
48. Are the work tables, benches and sink in the kitchen at such a height that when standing erect with arms hanging loosely in front of him and with palms up, one's knuckles just touch the work surface?
49. Is there a stool which can be used while working in the kitchen?
50. Are outlets for electrical appliances which are used intermittently (such as electric iron, vacuum cleaner, etc.) waist high so that stooping is unnecessary in connecting up the appliances?

(—And these are only a handful of the questions that the psychologists might ask the average American home in their attempt to determine the fitness of these dwellings for comfortable living.)

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